EMERGENCY MEASURES ORGANIZATION DEBRIEFING

for

HURRICANE JUAN

HELD: October 29, 2003
LOCATION: Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
HELD BEFORE: Honourable Ernest Fage,
Minister Responsible for NS EMO
Mr. Michael Lester, Chair

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October 29, 2003 - 9:05 a.m.

MIKE LESTER, EMO, THE CHAIR Thank you all for coming. We certainly appreciate the support by the numbers around here this morning, thank you for your enthusiasm.

Just a couple of administrative details before we get into the process. The fire exists, you can get out this way behind me here and down the stairs and out, the way you came in, and also down at the far end of the corridors.

Washrooms, out here, behind these doors, both the male and the female, and out here in the corridor as well.

We're looking at probably taking a break this morning at about 10:30, hopefully we'll move through this quite quickly but we'll see how the time goes.

Your name tags, in front of you, would you please angle them this way. As you were advised we are transcribing everything that's being said here this morning. We have to be able to tell who is doing the speaking.

I would ask you, please, when it is your turn to speak would you please say your name, and who you represent. If you forget I will probably interrupt you. Just so that we're sure we are going straight ahead.

We are also asking you to sign the sign-in sheet, of who's here this morning, so that we can provide copies of the transcript to you.

So I'd like before we get started here, to introduce The Honourable Ernie Fage, Minister responsible for the Emergency Measures Act who is with us here this morning. I would also remind you before we start, that the purpose here this morning is to identify what went well and what we could possibly do better. This does not involve personalities and finger pointing. We are talking about systems.

What we develop here this morning will become a public document. We have done this previously with Swiss Air and with 911. We found it to be a good record and really a basis for moving forward with some of the changes in the system.

I would ask you first, Minister, do you have anything that you wish to add at this point?

THE HONOURABLE ERNEST FAGE,
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR
EMERGENCY MEASURES ACT

Just, Mike, that I want to welcome everyone here. As Mike said, this is a critical part of the evaluation when we go through a disaster or a crisis such as this, ensuring that we've been able to properly advise and warn the general public and then execute properly during the event. Then the subsequent clean-up is extremely important. So I'd certainly, like Mike has said, encourage everyone to look at the process from their perspective and those comments on how we can improve, because we always can, are critically important.

Certainly, when you look at the overall situation and the response from Hurricane Juan, as Minister responsible, I am very impressed with how EMO is organized, how it is run and it certainly was a strong learning curve stepping into the ministry.

So this morning's discussions is about how we can improve that response and how we deal with the general public in a situation like this. So I encourage you all to be productive and contribute to that goal and, Mike, you're the man in charge. I notice you didn't have to mention that the sprinklers were on outside but nobody is going to melt either.

THE CHAIR Thank you, sir. We have a couple of people that have to catch planes and do other things here this morning, so I'll be asking them early in the agenda. What I would like to do, previously EMO had gone last as the host but I think to set the tempo of where we want to be going, I am going to ask Mike Myette the Deputy Director of EMO to do the EMO submission, please.

MIKE MYETTE

EMO NOVA SCOTIA

Good morning, I am Mike Myette. I am the Deputy Director of EMO Nova Scotia. I'm pleased to be here this morning to provide comments on behalf of the staff and management of our organization.

The arrival of Hurricane Juan in the early morning hours of September 28th provided us with a second significant opportunity to test the operational capacity of the centre where we gather here today. Most of you, or some of you at least, will remember that the first opportunity came within days of the official opening with the horrific New York terrorist attacks in 2001.

Once again, in the aftermath of Juan we have cause to reflect back on the facility we occupied prior to this one and its many shortfalls in terms of space, infrastructure and communications.

We are once again reminded, as a result of Juan, of the tremendous benefits and values that can result from the Province's decision to move to this wonderful facility.

As most of you know EMO is a small agency of 13 people. It was, for our entire organization, quite awe inspiring in the early hours of the hurricane to experience the arrival of a core group of emergency managers from across government and the private sector who responded promptly to our calls and gathered in this facility.

It is comforting, I think, for everyone to look around and observe the level of determination and dedication that permeated every square inch of the room, from start to finish of the Hurricane Juan Operation.

While we have said it before, we would be remiss if we didn't also take the opportunity to repeat it here today, and that is a heartfelt thank you to everyone from EMO Nova Scotia who assisted in the response to Hurricane Juan.

The Emergency Activation Team, as we refer to it, that initially assembled in this room include: staff from EMO; the office of Critical Infrastructure and Emergency Preparedness; the Provincial Departments - Community Services, Health, Environment and Labour, Education, Natural Resources, Transportation and Public Works, Intergovernmental Affairs; as well as the RCMP, Red Cross, Aliant, and the Power Corporation. My apologies if I have missed anyone, but those were what I gathered from the logs that we had.

The purpose of the meetings was to get a status update on the situation and to identify issues and then assign resolution teams to those issues.

The basis of the Emergency Activation team is built that it can retract and expand in size, as the situation changes, and it did just that by bringing more people in and as some people or agencies' responsibilities diminished they didn't feel a need to attend quite as frequently.

The meetings were seen by everyone who attended as useful and effective in implementing the Province's response to this situation.

The term used in the industry to describe a facility like the Joint Emergency Operation Centre is "hardened". We have redundant or alternate communications paths and a very capable back-up power generator that proved its worth several times over during the hurricane.

I was quite grateful for the shower facilities that were here during the power outages that affected my home, but the envy I had to suffer when I went home was a whole different matter. Going home all shaved and showered and my wife was looking at me with a different view.

The facility, as one might expect, in something that provides the force that Hurricane Juan did, experienced its share of impacts. The force of the hurricane dislodged both the air conditioner and the TV satellite dish from the roof of the building.

The loss of air conditioning created an

uncomfortable period for staff but was resolved by building maintenance within about a day and a half. The restoration of TV services followed shortly thereafter. Not really significant impact given the force of the hurricane and the damage and the destruction that it wreaked elsewhere in the province.

Once again, the strategic co-location of our municipal and federal emergency management counterparts in this building did us all proud. By agreeing to stagger the times for our situational briefings between the municipality and the province, liaison officers from both our agencies were able to attend each other's briefings and report on each other's status. That was seen as very effective and essential to our ability to work together and to understand and to respond to each other's needs.

This is, again so far as we know, the only footprint in Canada that has this kind of inter-cooperational capabilities. It really works well.

As part of our planning in preparing the strategy, most of you will know, EMO has mutual aid agreements with many other agencies and provinces to provide for the supply of additional equipment and people as necessary.

In the early days following the hurricane we received offers of assistance from Ontario, Quebec, New

Brunswick, Alberta, Newfoundland, as well as the states of Maine and Vermont.

Now by their very nature each emergency is different, each challenges us in different ways. Dealing with a mass power outage can be quite different than dealing with a flood or several thousand displaced airline passengers.

Creature comforts, including meals and accommodation, are essential elements of any emergency response. To keep people energized and working it is essential to have good quality food and places to rest. So as we called in our staff from outside of Halifax, in the early hours before the hurricane hit, we planned to lodge them in local hotels. Of course by the time they went to the hotels, the hotels were without power. Had this event occurred in the dead of winter, the local hotels would have been, for the largest part, entirely useless to us without heat.

So I think one of our go-forward tasks is to either locate available facilities for our staff with back-up heat and power or possibly even to incorporate sleeping facilities into this building that we can use on a shift rotational type basis.

On the meal side we were especially fortunate, given the extent of the power outage, that we had a local caterer who still had access to propane. She must have been cooking by flashlight, but the quality of the meals that arrived on time here at this facility was just outstanding.

As part of our business planning process we had never really given any thought to doing a survey of which local caterers actually have backup power. That is something we are going to be looking at so that we don't have all our eggs in one basket with the one caterer.

I have referred to the obvious advantages of having showers in the building. A lot of people took advantage of them. But what we didn't have on hand was a supply of towels, soap, shampoo or toothbrushes and toothpaste. Altogether this represents a small expenditure or investment but these are items that are worth their weight in gold to people who can't get them or can't get home to get them.

We mentioned previously the benefits of having all three levels of Government residing on the same building footprint. As with most things in life, there's a flip side. The flip side of having such a large family co-habiting in this building is that there is many visitors and security becomes an issue. We ran into a few problems initially with controlling access and we responded by retaining staff from the Corps of

Commissioners to assist us. That filled the gap, but we also realized that we need to develop effective operating procedures for security to delineate how people get into the building and how they get past that security desk. So that is another thing we will be working on.

Administratively we have identified several opportunities for improvements including the necessity for some ergonomic improvements to our EOC computer work station used by the person who inputs to the log. We tend to look at all of our permanent work stations ergonomically and we missed the one that the person sits at in here. For all intents and purposes that becomes rather permanent when a person's sitting there for hours on end inputting logs.

It is also noted that this particular room has neither a photocopier nor a fax nor a printer, all of which would have been useful to the staff that were working in the room. We have them, of course, in other places in the building but it would be obviously useful to have one inside this room.

For some, who attended in this room over the course of the hurricane, it was their first opportunity to participate in the Emergency Operation Centre. While there were no major negative impacts that resulted from the lack of experience, everyone acknowledges the important contribution that experience brings to an operation such as this one. So they and we have all recognized the need for some additional training in the management of an Emergency Operation Centre.

As most of you will know, training is one of EMO's core business functions. EOC management is one of the courses on the curriculum. So we will be moving forward, using out attendance logs, to offer EOC training to anyone who has not already taken advantage of it. That, of course, builds our strength as individuals and our strength as a corporate entity capable of responding to an emergency.

Another essential element of emergency operations is communications to the public on the status of the operation. People have a need to know and a desire to know and an absolute critical need to understand how the emergency is impacting them.

We were fortunate to have several staff from the Province's Corporate Communications arm attend here for several days following the emergency. Again, looking at the power outage, given that we had power here and Communications Nova Scotia didn't have power at their own offices, we quickly realized that we could use an enhanced ability here to send information out to the media, in terms of certain technical infrastructure.

This infrastructure is neither particularly complex nor expensive to implement. So we will be looking forward at enhancing our communications ability so that, again, we can rely on this as the centralized facility it needs to be in some emergencies.

As frequently happens, and as they should always do, the court of public opinion weighed in on a couple of issues surrounding communications. Some visitors to our website pointed out that it was somewhat confusing, it needed improvements. We agree.

Also, we received correspondence suggesting that we consider using radio and television media warning systems similar to those in place in the USA. That warrants consideration as well.

So there are two areas of our communication strategy that we will be focusing on in our upcoming business planning discussions for the coming year.

I have mentioned a number of various agencies and departments that actually attended and are represented in this room. There is, of course, a very large external group, whom while they weren't actually represented here, contributed significantly to the Province's response and its capability to respond. Many of the staff in this centre were in continuous contact with agencies and representatives that were active throughout the impacted areas providing assistance and collecting status information.

We have to note that the emergency operation that went on in this room was, for the most part, duplicated in Lunenburg, Colchester, Pictou, East Hants, Guysborough and Antigonish, where individuals, just like ourselves, that are responsible for emergency management they got together and they responded to the impacts of the hurricane. We expect that in each one of those areas there will be a debrief session similar to this one. Our staff will be attending those sessions. We fully expect that we will identify additional opportunities for us to be able to do business better the next time. That, of course, is the purpose of this sort of a debrief session is to identify opportunities to improve our business practises. EMO looks forward to hearing from each of you in your discussions this morning.

Thank you, those are the comments from EMO.

THE CHAIR Thank you Mike. Any questions, please, for EMO Nova Scotia. [no response] Thank you.

I would like to turn now, please, to Superintendent Craig MacLaughlin of the RCMP.

SUPT. CRAIG MacLAUGHLIN

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Good morning, Minister, and good morning everyone.

In the early morning hours of the hurricane approximately 170 RCMP and HRP police officers responded to calls for service in the first 24 hours.

In addition, to that, in days that followed over 120 members of the RCMP volunteered to assist farm and farm families in both the Cumberland and Hants County areas in cleaning their yards to give access to power people to get in and help them get hooked up with the power.

Our strategy at the time was to deploy members throughout the Province with a high visibility, hoping to deter crime, but at the same time be in the position to save life and/or property.

Our high visibility must have worked because our crime trends through the weeks that followed, doing our checks, have showed that there was no large increase, it pretty well stayed the same, which was good and spoke for the assistance that the community offered the police during this time of need.

The problem areas, of course, that we ran into within the first few hours it was reported that normal calls to our call centre, or to what's called the Operational Command Centre, were quadrupling in calls. The 911 became overburdened and, I guess, it all had to do with just the emergency. I mean whether we had 500 people and 500 call centres I'm sure that that amount of people calling for service probably just wouldn't have -- we wouldn't be able to fix it.

The normal calls then on top of that for regular police service was overwhelming, and then we had problems replacing staff just because of the power outages and road closures. We had people that were in the OCC for in excess of 24 hours.

I think one of the things that we found internally that we could have done much better. We looked at and we took care of the people that we serviced, we forgot a little bit about the people that work for us. We found that we have got to do a much better communication system inside to help our own staff. Though we are out helping everybody else, at times we forgot that our people who had been working these long hours and, who also had families at home, had no help to their families. So we have taken steps now to address that.

Another we thought that needs attention or should have needed closer attention, we think, was when the evacuation order went out, it should have went out sooner. We found at times that we were getting so close that our members were in a position of possible peril for themselves because we waited until we made some of those decisions.

Also, internally some our detachments had generators, some did not. Some had generators that didn't work. Again, something that we have had to rectify and has been done.

Overall, this Province needs a communication system that is all tied together with all emergency services, including a records management system, something that we called NR3. But a system that can be set up, a stand alone, that could keep track of an incident such as this for all of us, where we could keep our data and also be able to turn a couple of switches and talk to each other. The helicopters flying over head, the fire trucks parked next door to you - there's no question that there should be one communication system throughout the Province. When you think about it, we have 13 police departments and right now, on a very limited basis, the HRP and the RCMP are the only two who can talk to each other and that is very limited.

One of our main concerns also was that our record management system for major crimes or major incidents was located in Burnside. The building that it was located in is a commercial building that we rent and their generator did not work. So our major system went down and caused us some real peril that night. That has been rectified now. In headquarters we set up a second records management system.

We have also been working actually for the last two years on a new national RCMP mobilization plan across the country. The RCMP in Nova Scotia are taking some of the first steps in making this a reality. As a matter of fact, we are into it as of yesterday with a federal exercise called Atlantic Guard Two. That is ongoing as we speak. I started Monday and we will finish on Friday morning. This new mobilization plan that we are kicking it in to see where some of the shortfalls are within this plan and we feel that overall, as an organization, that it is going to better prepare us in times of emergencies.

I like what Mike said when he talked about training. It is a real shortfall. I believe that, not only EMO, but OCIPEP should have -- actually there was a course that I had taken actually in Newfoundland from OCIPEP and it was an incident command course that was offered and we need to bring that to the Province. Maybe it is already here but I haven't heard of it. We need to work together in partnership, all of us. We don't do a practise like this in a scenario that we did in that course. We should have that course, it should be a bona fide, certified type of course at EMO and OCIPEP approved, so that when some of leave and go on to greener pastures there is people behind us who are trained and able to carry on because we don't know when the next one is going to happen.

For my last two years of being here in Nova Scotia, it seems that it happens about every 30 days. So, sir, I must ask that if there is no further questions after this presentation, that I be able to step out. I am the Operations Commander for Atlantic Guard Two for the RCMP and we have a full DEOC up and running, like we needed another one, today. It is going well, it has been pretty interesting but it is very true to life and unfortunately my talents are needed elsewhere.

THE CHAIR Thanks, Craig. Anything for the RCMP, please? [No response] Thanks very much.

SUPT. CRAIG MacLAUGHLIN Sir, thank you.

THE CHAIR I'd like now please, to turn to Jo-Anne Scharf the acting Regional Director of OCIPEP, please.

JO-ANNE SCHARF

OFFICE OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Good morning everyone. My name is Jo-Anne Scharf. I am the acting Regional Director for the Federal Government's Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness. (OCIPEP)

Our mission is to enhance the safety and security of all Canadians in their physical and cyber environments. This is achieved through two keys mandates. One is to provide national leadership in the protection of Canada's critical infrastructure. The other, is to serve as the Federal Government's primary consequence management response agency for ensuring national civil emergency preparedness, including in support of Provinces and Territories, or supporting another Federal department or agency, which has been identified as the Federal lead.

For any emergencies that fall under provincial jurisdiction the Federal Government provides support to the affected authority in the management of consequences. In such cases the Federal Government through PCO, the Privy Council of Canada, identifies lead federal agency with relevant experience to coordinate Federal support to the affected province.

OCIPEP was identified to support Nova Scotia during Hurricane Juan. Consequently, PCO convened a conference call of several Federal departments including OCIPEP, Environment Canada, Communications Canada, RCMP, DFO, DND, and others, late on Friday, September 26th in reference to Hurricane Juan. As a result, OCIPEP went into standby mode for the weekend. Myself and the OPs officers were briefed on weather tracking by the GEOC (Ottawa), which is the Government of Canada Emergency Centre, throughout that weekend.

On the morning of the 28th we were advised by EMO

Nova Scotia, that the JEOC would open at 13:00 hours and OCIPEP operationalized its office team. From a regional office perspective in Nova Scotia, we are three permanent employees. To cover off the phones, the log, and administrative functions we used Commissionaire services and staff support from Stats Canada for our OCIPEP reception area. We were also instrumental in helping to secure Commissionaire services for EMO Nova Scotia. OCIPEP attended all briefings here in the JEOC, as well as in the HRM Emergency Operation Centre, and participated in conference calls during the run-up to the hurricane, during and until the final briefing on Thursday, October the 9th.

OCIPEP maintained regular contact with the GEOC in Ottawa providing sit. reps and keeping senior OCIPEP apprised of the situation.

Once the HRM Mayor Kelly declared a local state of emergency, at 21:00 hours on September 28th, consultations between the various Government emergency management directors began with respect to things like evacuation of coastal areas within six feet of the high tide mark, and employee return to work.

At approximately 03:00 on September 29th, Mayor Kelly decided to send out a release concerning municipal employees staying at home on September 29th.

OCIPEP recommended that federal employees follow suit and sent this information through to the GEOC. Once the appropriate approvals were received, OCIPEP was able to circulate the message to the media contacts regarding Federal employees and their request to stay at home.

This message to Municipal, Provincial and Federal employees was repeated for September 30th. OCIPEP would like to thank Nova Scotia Public Affairs personnel working in the JEOC for this public advisory support.

Several calls were made to regional heads of Federal Council in the early hours of September 29th as a follow-up to the press release that there was a state of emergency and that the message to Federal employees was to stay at home.

Late in the morning of September 29th, OCIPEP facilitated the request for LFFA support, to the emergency cleanup response. This had come from the HRM Emergency Coordinator to EMO Nova Scotia. Details of this support will be included in the LFAA report.

As the recovery continued there were several requests that required additional capacity. OCIPEP was able to assist with some of these requests by sending them out to the federal departments who wanted to assist in the recovery effort, including: two large trucks and drivers supplied by the Coast Guard to assist with debris clean up; a customs remission to facilitate expeditious border crossing for the power crews from the State of Maine; a call to the Atlantic Highways Management Corporation to allow these crews free passage through Cobequid Pass; Federal volunteers to assist emergency social services in food and water deliveries, and assistance to seniors.

There was also a call out for Federal volunteers to assist in debris cleanup in the Truro area.

From a federal-provincial perspective, as the acting Regional Director for OCIPEP Nova Scotia, I played a role in terms of providing briefings to Federal Ministers visiting the area to assess the damages.

On the evening of September 30th I briefed the Minister of National Defence John MacCallum, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Robert Thibault also Nova Scotia's representative to the Federal Government. Admiral Glen Davidson, MARLANT Halifax, MLA Geoff Regan and NDP representative Alexa McDonough, on the status of the recovery efforts to date.

Commencing September 30th and continuing each day for a week and a half we provided sit. reps on the recovery at meetings and through conference calls held by the Chair of the Federal council for Federal agency and departmental representatives.

As well, there were daily conference calls with PCO and senior management of OCIPEP HQ. Ongoing sit. reps were provided to the GEOC, which were then distributed to other Federal ministries.

The OCIPEP office continued to have extended hours for a seven-day period or until the local state of emergency had expired.

What worked well, in my view, was the level of cooperation and support between the various levels of government. This was in part attributed to the co-location of Municipal, Provincial and Federal Emergency Management Personnel but, more importantly, to the spirit of trust and understanding amongst the representatives working in the centres.

During the response and recovery phases there was a seamless cooperation, that worked well and without political barriers, in a coordinated effort to respond to the crisis. This was refreshing to see.

Secondly, with the Joint Emergency Operations Centre and the HRM Emergency Operation Centre in full operation on September 28th we were well positioned to put the emergency protocols in action. Inter-departmental cooperation at the federal level including our partners LFAA and RCMP and the JEOC, as well as other ministries, should also be noted with respect to the many calls of offers to assist in whatever capacity they could do to help out.

Where we can do better. Contact information. In the very early hours of September 29th finding current coordinates, including cell phone numbers, of Federal council members was a challenge and this has now been improved with a much more comprehensive list of contact information.

Communications. This is an ever-increasing area of importance at national, regional and local levels. As part of their portfolio PCO has been given the lead to look at Federal Government public communications during an emergency. Work is being done to improve things like Federal presence, decisions on office closures and a more analytical and coordinated communications effort. While communication is important, there were at time pressures to provide updates and sit. reps. It has been noted that there is a link between operational response and coordination of sit. reps. There will be a review of the number of conference calls and sit. reps required and overall a look at the scheduling to allow for operational realities during a response phase.

Strategic emergency management framework. This is needed to operationalize the roles played by regional Federal departments and agencies during an emergency.

The framework would represent a process that would enhance emergency preparedness and response capabilities and clarify roles of departments, agencies, and federal councils. As well, it would support OCIPEP in fulfilling their role in the coordination of the Federal regional response during an emergency.

While OCIPEP's primary role was to support the province during Hurricane Juan, the framework would be invaluable when we support lead Federal departments during an emergency.

I have taken some preliminary steps to move this forward within the Nova Scotia Federal Council.

Closely linked to this is the need to share information, best practises, and to practise business resumption and continuity plans within the Federal community. This would form part of the framework and would address the issue of training and currency of plans and operations.

Every Federal department and agency has a responsibility to ensure emergency preparedness plans are in place. You cannot separate business continuity plans from the emergency planning, they go hand in hand. My goal is to continue to promote training and exercising throughout the Federal community.

I have tried to provide a snapshot of how OCIPEP had participated in and provided support to the emergency response and recovery efforts taking place in the HRM and other areas of the Province. OCIPEP's small physical presence on the ground has been noted and there is hope that this may improve as a result of a national review of regional office structures that has been underway during the past year.

I have gained valuable insight with respect to OCIPEP's roles and responsibilities and the resources required to fulfil our regional mandate. However, I feel that we made every attempt to assist and meet the identified needs and I am proud of my small staff contingency and the long hours they worked during the effort.

Overall, during the emergency life cycle, I feel that OCIPEP was able to fulfil its mandate in supporting the Province of Nova Scotia during Hurricane Juan. Since this was my first opportunity to experience emergency preparedness protocols here in the two centres, and in a real life scenario, I want to thank everyone for their patience and support. Respectively, submitted.

THE CHAIR Thank you Jo-Anne, any questions please for OCIPEP? [no response]

Okay, I think at this point I'm going to turn to Natural Resources and the Deputy Minister of Natural

Resources, who might escape on me if I don't take him now. Dan Graham, Natural Resources.

DAN GRAHAM

DEPUTY MINISTER, DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Thank you Mike. My name is Dan Graham. I'm the Deputy Minister for the Department of Natural Resources.

The Departmental Emergency Preparedness Officer for DNR, as you probably know, is Brian Gilbert and he could not be in attendance this morning. However, I was involved from the beginning with Hurricane Juan, so I am sitting in on his behalf.

Our response, I believe the DNR response went well to Hurricane Juan. A lot of it, I think, stems from the fact that part of our business involving our fire season there is a lot preparatory work preplanned that goes into place with the Department. Our response went well.

The challenge we had at the beginning of the call was to get actually someone to this location for the 7:00 meeting. Most of our staff were, in fact, involved with Federal-Provincial meetings in Quebec and were either enroute or unavailable. As it turned out, what we found it was invaluable to us -- we have, I was going to mention this, a little pocket card with phone numbers on it and I was sitting in a hotel calling people. We finally did contact Mr. Gilbert, who was on an airplane, and we finally got him to this location at 7:00. So it did work well in that regard.

Our role in this situation is mainly to provide resources and that went well. We were responsible for ensuring that, once the hurricane did strike, the radio system -- we provide the mechanical support to ensure that the generators that are providing power to the radio grid are, in fact, up and operating. Those individuals were put on standby and were available in the early hours of Monday to make sure that the system continued to run on auxiliary power. That went well.

Our air service was, as well, put on standby and our helicopter fleet was available in the event that they were needed for a response in the event of follow-up.

In the afternoon of September 28th we took steps, after consultation with EMO, we had individuals dealing with Lawrencetown Beach. We had staff to deal with wave watchers. We took a proactive approach through the local office through our area supervisor. As well, we took steps based looking at the forest cover at our Porter's Lake Provincial Park, in the afternoon we evacuated the campers that were located in the park and put them in the parking lot area. And as a result, although the parks suffered severe damage, we had no injuries of any kind.

Briefly that's where we were, we were available --

we're now involved heavily with the clean-up, as you can appreciate, with our provincial park system with woodlot owners basically from Halifax to Tatamagouche. We are heavily involved in the follow-up to that and that is working quite well through the EMO office.

That's pretty well it, thank you very much.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Dan, any questions please for Natural Resources? [No response] Okay, let's start in sequence here then please, Carla Burns, Communications Nova Scotia.

CARLA BURNS

COMMUNICATIONS NOVA SCOTIA

Good morning, everyone. My name is Carla Burns. I am with Communications Nova Scotia, which is the central agency of the Nova Scotia Government. We are responsible for the Province's public information plan. In addition, we are also members of the Provincial Emergency Action Team. I am our agency's departmental Planning Officer as well as an alternate to the Director of Public Information.

We activated part of our plan prior to the hurricane. From September 28th to October 6th we had five staff members working at the Joint Emergency Operation Centre.

We also provided communications at the corporate and departmental level, as well as writing, editing, news release delivery and media monitoring services at our offices in the provincial building.

We held a debriefing session on October 20th with Communication staff. We discussed many items including what worked and areas that we could improve on.

Overall, it was felt that communications went very well prior to and following the hurricane. Operations personnel ensured that Communications people were well informed. We found that the twice-daily situational reports were very beneficial from a Communications' perspective and the Joint EOC worked well for information sharing as well as verifying information.

Due to power outages, we did face some challenges throughout the night of September 28th in relaying information to media. We were, however, able to overcome those challenges and we did get the necessary information out.

Communications Nova Scotia, as part of our ongoing review of our plan, will continue to look for ways to improve on the way we do our business during emergencies. I will highlight some of the recommendations and initiatives that we will bring forth to improve communications during emergency situations.

We will continue to develop relationships with external agencies. This will ensure that information during emergency situations is consistent and that we are consistent in delivery of our messages. It will also establish a communications network as needed, ensure that communications emergency contact lists are kept up-to-date as well as identify key communications personnel and their roles and their responsibility.

A larger working area for Communications is needed at EMO. We found that as the need for information and communications resources grows during emergency, we need to be able to facilitate an area to accommodate staff and methods to facilitate the information flow to our partners, to the media, and to the public.

We will continue to develop effective working relationships with news organizations. Part of our day-to-day business, we are in touch with media, we go out and visit them annually throughout the Province to make sure that we are providing effective service. We will continue this practise to ensure we have effective working relationships with our media colleagues during a time of emergency.

We will identify a communications staff person in each department, who will be a member of the communications team during an emergency. Many of our departments have a communications director, advisor, and an officer. We feel it would be beneficial to identify one person who will be responsible for providing communications. They will work with the departmental emergency preparedness officer to ensure the flow of information. This would also expand on our communications' resources so that we can assign one individual to a particular task such as media analysis, media monitoring, writing services, and they will be part of that team here at the EOC and in the Provincial Building.

We will continue to prepare general emergency information and safety tips so that it is readily available when needed during an emergency. So that way, you know, as the information is required to get out to the public, we will have it ready to go in a news release format or up on our website or what have you.

Part of our business plan is professional development and this year we are going to incorporate an emergency public information session for all of our agency staff. It will help to ensure that everyone is aware of our role during emergencies. It will include our creative services division and all the people who are out into the departments.

I would like to thank everybody for their cooperation and help during Hurricane Juan. We certainly couldn't have done our job without the help of all of you folks, thank you.

THE CHAIR Thank you Carla, any questions please for Communications Nova Scotia? [no response] Moving along to Aliant please, Larry Holdright.

LARRY HOLDRIGHT

ALIANT

Thanks, Mike. My name is Larry Holdright. I am representing Aliant here today.

Back on September the 28th, in the evening, I think it was around seven we met here at EMO with EMO staff and group that got together here early in the evening to kind of get a view as to what was anticipated and what we thought was coming down the pipe. Anyway, hopefully we didn't underestimate it. We activated our Emergency Response Centre around midnight on the 28th and we patiently waited then to see what the storm was going to bring us and we didn't have to wait very long, I might add.

By 4 a.m. on the 29th we had over 100 of our sites, our central office sites, that were without commercial AC power, which turned out to be, I'll call it, the biggest thorn or the largest thorn that we had was the fact that we had lost power at so many sites. Some of our sites have permanent back-up generators and many do not. We have portable generators that we utilize to back-up the sites that do not have permanent generators.

So we deployed as many folks and generators that we could muster up. As I mentioned, there were over 100 of those sites initially. So we had to prioritize the services that we were going to attempt to maintain. Trunk mobile radio turned out to be our number one priority, so we immediately dispatched generators and personnel to those sites to ensure that we could maintain that service.

Some of the sites we were inhibited from being able to access because of debris in the road, power lines down across the road, and things like that. So we did run into a few situations like that, but nothing that we weren't able to overcome.

Our second priority was the cellular CDPD network because that is also used by the police departments and that for communication and somewhat of a back-up for TMR. Then after the CDPD, we looked at our large dial exchanges and centres where we would be serving entire communities and large areas. Then the remainder of our network was falling in to place behind that.

We were very fortunate from the perspective that we had no significant structural damage to any of our centres, our buildings. Our infrastructure seemed to hold up very well. Like I say, it was the fact that we were without commercial AC power that turned out to be our biggest obstacle.

Generator availability did not turn out to be an issue like portable generators. Not unlike what I am hearing here today, we had offers from -- we brought generators and personnel in from New Brunswick. As well we had offers from Bell Canada, Bell Quebec, Bell Ontario, Manitoba Tel, Sask Tel, the phone companies in the Eastern US all offered us assistance with portable generators and that. We didn't have to take them up on the offer because we found that we had enough asset I'll call it.

Where we struggled a little bit was getting staffing for those generators. Normally we look at, you know, we got a generator and you've got a body with the generator. We haven't traditionally had to deal with the situation of this magnitude where it goes on for days and days and days, where you have to now baby-sit those generators around the clock 24 hours a day.

So what we found was that we actually needed about three staff for every portable generator that we had in order to provide that 7/24 coverage, as well as giving the personnel some down time, as someone else mentioned, to get with family and get back and deal with some issues that they had. So that turned out to be a little bit of an issue with staffing.

As far as lessons learned, if we had to do that again, I think what we would do is we would take all of our offices that have permanent back-up power generators, we would put our offices over on the back-up power prior to the storm rather than sit and wait for the wrath of mother nature to take us out, with the power hits going off and on, off and on it is not good for our equipment, it is not good for our infrastructure.

So again, if we had to do that over again I think one thing we would do is take all of our offices and have back-up power and put our load over on the back-up power before the storm ever took us down.

We would then be in control of those situations. We would have back-up fuel out there, we would be, I think in better condition than what we were perhaps by waiting for mother nature to do it for us.

We would also dispatch personnel prior to the event. So as well as putting those office's over on back-up generator and power, we would dispatch our personnel to our locations and have them there, just sort of on hot standby rather than have them waiting at home for us to call them. What we ran into in some instances, as I'm sure you folks did as well, when we contacted our personnel to come in at 4 a.m. or 5 a.m. on Monday morning, we got met with, Well, I can't get out of my driveway or there's power lines down across the road.

So we ended up getting spread a little bit thin in that we had to use the personnel that we could get in, and the ones we couldn't we had to wait until they were able to get in. So by having them into our own centres and with their vehicles and that I think we could have reacted a little bit quicker than perhaps we were able to.

We would also consider or we are looking at utilizing some non-Aliant staff to help us with the sitting with the generators and that and ensuring that they are fuelled up. We have already had some meetings with the Provincial Government and it came up. I think it is a good idea to say, you know, why we couldn't have utilized maybe ground search and rescue teams to come out and assist us with watching the generators over night and ensuring that they stayed running, stayed fuelled up, that kind of thing.

We have got, you know, some union issues there that we would need to deal with but we are in talks with the union on that too to see if something like that could work in the future.

A fuel source. Again rather than wait, we have an agreement with the Irving Group that they will make us a priority for fuel during a disaster and we have that agreement. But again, what happened was we waited until we actually required the fuel before we contacted Irving Group to say, okay, We're out of fuel, we're running out of fuel in these sites and we need fuel. As we all know, with no power in metro here, even Irving couldn't get fuel. So what they were able to do for us though, they did step up to the challenge they trucked fuel in from the Valley. However, it added a few hours of some tense moments for us while we were waiting those few hours for that fuel to arrive and get in to the tanks.

So again in the future what I think we would need to do is to contact Irving Group and have them have their trucks fully fuelled up and sitting close by for our use when required.

Other than that, I don't think we did too bad of a job. We probably at the peak of the storm we had probably close to 10,000 lines that were without service. Pockets throughout, spread from Halifax right up through the Truro area and it changed as we would arrive with a generator and restore power we would restore to that community and then we'd have another pocket, another community. Over the run, I think, by Wednesday we had all those sites restored and we were 100 percent back in service.

On the outside part of our business, with the outside forces in keeping individual houses with phones and that, we had upwards I think it was 8,000 trouble reports in the first couple of days of people who had drop wires torn off their houses, and were without phone sets and that. By, I believe it was, the Saturday or the Sunday following storm, a week later, we had I think it was close to all of those restored and back in service, as well.

So other than what I have mentioned here, those were the challenges that we had. I won't say I enjoyed it, but we did have a lot of learning and we exercised a lot of emergency preparedness that we have put in place over the years and we have found what worked and what didn't work.

Oh, I also should mention that we activated our Emergency Operations Centre at around 5 a.m. on Monday morning. The Emergency Operations Centre is a group of people that get together to assist the Emergency Response Centre in dealing with logistics, communications. We are concentrating on fixing the problems that we have, they're helping us with the issues we need.

So when we need fuel procured, generators, communications to the public or to our executive, these are the people that are kind of working behind the scenes to make that happen and do the communications piece for us.

So that is it for Aliant, thank you.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Larry. Any questions, please, for Aliant. Tony Eden please.

TONY EDEN Tony Eden, EHS. Not a question, but more a comment is I appreciate your comment about Irving promising you priority on the fuel. They also made us that same promise too. So we might want to watch that in the future. Everybody thinks that they are getting the same fuel truck coming in from the Valley, Municipal police cars, generators, everything else, we might want to watch that.

THE CHAIR Thank you. Okay, to Emergency Social Services please, John Webb.

JOHN WEBB

EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES

Thank you Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister and fellow Juan-ites, I guess is the way I'll put it. Sunday September 28th, knowing the storm was coming, we fanned out with Red Cross and Community Services and our partners and we reported, as requested, to the Op. Centre at 7:00, and then tried to get our prior emergency numbers in order until the storm came and until it subsided so we could see what was happening and where we would be involved.

Of course, the first responders we know, fire, police, and ambulance take people out of harm's way. And us, as second responders, Community Service is responsible to deal with people who are displaced and need shelter, food or those in homes who need assistance as a result of a disaster.

Community Services, and Emergency Social Service as part of it, is responsible for the five social services, food, clothing, lodging, registration inquiry, and personal services, including ensuring that the psychosocial aspect is taken care of in consultation with the Department of Health. This happens mostly in reception centres and shelters as a tradition.

As of April 1st, 2000, Nova Scotia, I was proud to say that we were the first Province in Canada to contract the Red Cross to provide for the five emergency services in large scale emergencies and, also, including management of reception centres. They work sub-agreements to help them with such groups as the Salvation Army, St. John Ambulance, food banks, clubs et cetera, as required.

In large emergencies or disasters we depend on the natural reaction of people to be able to help one another but due to the magnitude of the hurricane we cannot immediately help everyone who needs food and all of the other services. People did not disappoint. They did help and people helped each other. As I said, we do depend on that greatly.

What I want to do is turn this over now to the Red Cross on our Emergency Social Service response in helping the vulnerable people, in deciding who we should help -- based on a best risk assessment that we could do following the hurricane, who we are to help in relation to our resources and creativity. After Joanne talks of that then I will comment on the other area of our department, large response and the social assistance and housing sections.

JOANNE LAWLOR
RED CROSS

Good morning, thank you. On behalf of the Red Cross, first of all, we'd like to thank the hundreds of volunteers - our community partners here today as well as the corporate partners - who once again stepped up and provided the assistance that they did to assist us with Hurricane Juan. It is important to emphasize here today the Red Cross would not have been able to do the work they did had it not been for the partnerships that we have developed and nurtured over these past few years.

Once again, this disaster provided us the opportunity just to strengthen those relationships that we already had.

It is the mandate of the Red Cross to offer assistance to vulnerable people in time of need. In the early hours of Monday, September the 29th, the Red Cross realized there were thousands of vulnerable people. However, they were not going to be able to assist each and every one of them. So in consultation with our partners, Department of Community Services and Housing, it was decided that our organization would concentrate our immediate attention on assisting seniors and public housing as well as low income housing developments.

Our 12 day response, working side by side with the Community Services, included: the management of reception centres; conducting barbecues and food drops; assisting various communities with the comfort centres, which had been established by HRM; answering thousands of calls from any troubled individuals; and meeting the specific needs of individuals who were identified day by day. Without a question this was the largest challenge the Nova Scotia Region of Red Cross had ever experienced.

Throughout this response we assisted approximately 30,000 people, provided 5,000 meals, 40,000 bottles of water and juice, had assistance from over 200 volunteers, who provided approximately 5,000 volunteer hours. We distributed food drops to over 45 locations throughout the Municipality as well as the Truro area.

Our challenges. We did have several challenges. Initially safety issues were major concerns. We were concerned for the safety of our volunteers who responded so quickly on the evening of the September the 28th. Moving volunteers to our reception centres as well as bringing in volunteers from other provinces, which we do on a regular basis, also posed a problem that evening.

In addition, because of the magnitude of the affected people many of our volunteers were impacted personally themselves and thus our volunteer capacity for the first couple of days was also challenged.

We had logistical problems, like everybody else, in obtaining supplies to provide assistance to all of those vulnerable people.

There were many lessons learned. The importance of continuing to build these strategic partnerships with the various community agencies will only make us that much better as we continue to provide assistance. We realize the importance of enhancing the great partnership we already have with the Department of Community Services, as well as the Department of Health, who we work with day by day.

The need to build our volunteer capacity was very evident. These volunteers are the backbone of our organization and thus are very important. We have developed some strategies with some businesses over the last couple of weeks and they have indicated their desire to assist us in providing volunteers from their actual business locations.

We need to improve our communication skills, internally with our volunteers as well as our staff. Also it once again brought the need of increase in the level of training that we have, and that we can provide to the hundreds of volunteers.

As the RCMP and several other people, I think, have mentioned, we recognize the need to look after our own employees who gave so much time and effort in those 12 days. Thank you very much.

JOHN WEBB Thank you, and for record as we mentioned, that's Joanne Lawlor who is the Community Response Manager for Canadian Red Cross.

I will continue on about the social assistance and housing section of our department. Our problems that we found immediately on Monday with power being out on Monday and Tuesday for our civil service not being able to go to work. We also realized that the social assistance people had received their cheques on Friday, September 27, what happens of course, they stock their fridges or freezers in anticipation for the month, and not realizing the impact that this might have I'm sure people were stocking up as opposed to getting less food in. We also found that those with Canada Pension, OAS and pensioners also would have received their cheques in that week.

Our social assistance office, as we mentioned, was closed Monday and Tuesday causing people to start to panic whether it was real or perceived.

The Department of Community Service Social Assistance and Housing sections mobilized to assist those on assistance or those who may be eligible for assistance who needed assistance, not to replace food, not to compensate them, but to assist based on need, and to decide whether the needs assessment realized that they required food or any other services.

We immediately gave a grocery voucher of $50 per adult and for a family and $10 for additional children. We gave further cheques based on a need to hold people over especially people with children until the Child Tax Benefit came in around the 20th of the month.

One of the problems we had of course that people's cheques would have been different based on different needs. The word got around quite quickly about that.

Our case workers worked nights and weekends to clear voice mails that were overloaded. We also found, especially where offices were closed Monday and Tuesday, the pressure built in that section incredibly.

Our call centres at the Red Cross 1-800 number and the HRM number were overloaded. So we put social assistance case workers there to help defer people who were running the centres. It was causing a lot of stress and our workers were able to determine whether again the need was immediate or not.

We also, requested the food banks, and Parker Street Food Bank has an umbrella of over a 100 sub-food banks. We got them to target the working poor, the pensioners, CPP, and the Old Age Security people knowing that we would help those on social assistance.

How much did we give? In terms of the assistance from the 1st to the 27th, we gave over, purchase orders and vouchers for food, 5,261 which totals $370,845. It's average about $70 per family. That was mostly for emergency food, groceries for about 5,000, medical travel, food and shelter - 61, home repair under $1,000 - 17, and assisting for rent for those who might have been displaced - 10.

Cheques. We gave out 3,452 cheques. $410,000 was the amount and it averaged $118 per unit. That was mostly for food cheques, again to Child Tax Benefit or another source of income at the end of the month. That was approximately 3428. Emergency repairs under $1,000.00 there were 24.

This is for the three regions of central, northern, and western. The bulk of them, of course, came from HRM, the central region, the second highest was in northern and a lot in East Hants. I won't break down those areas but I have those.

We also had overtime hours of all unionized staff, 836 hours participated.

Our regional housing section under the Department of Community Services assessed those who had repairs over $1,000. We assessed those who were on assistance or with very low income and that is income based as opposed to social assistance that is needs tested. They were able to help with essential repairs to homes that were owned and those not eligible or perceived not to be eligible for DFAA or insurance.

In the northern region they assisted with to date $74,000 in grants. Out of the Truro office, $8,000 in grants, out of the New Glasgow office and our central office here in HRM is $24,000 for 12 situations that were assessed.

In the recovery phase we are still involved with that. We are assisting and helping to assess people that need debris cleared from their homes. We assist them with our resource person for a number of weeks, and with people to help volunteer, and we are also helping to clear debris from low income homes, for people who were on social assistance, Old Age Security or Canada Pension or the working poor. We are trying to match those up and do a bit of an assessment as to who really has need or who has the ability to pay on their own for contractors. We do not want to undermine contractors that can come into people that can afford to clear their properties. It is a bit of a difficult task.

We were working with HRM on that. It was their initiative. In Truro they're also doing it. Adopt a property program - they did a huge one-day blitz to help volunteers go on the eastern shore especially and they're now matching volunteers and groups, individuals, like Lion's Clubs, those sorts of things, with those who need. And again, mainly on the eastern shore.

Repairs. We also met with the National Mennonite Leaders Christian Reform National Disaster Response who came in approximately a week after and they wanted to help out. But we were discovering and we realize that and tried to encourage them to wait and see who may have needed repairs. We realize it is not a large scale basis it is taken care of by the other services, but they are going to help any of those that are left in the gaps on a small scale basis. The housing section is still assessing the cases.

What went well? At Department Community Services and Red Cross, all our staff and volunteers, I feel they did a great job with help of all the staff, the Red Cross staff and all of their partners such as the Salvation Army, the Regional Housing Authority, food banks, fire departments, ladies auxiliaries, corporations. We assisted as many as we could with food, water, support, social assistance, housing and even such things as stretchers from the national stockpile and with some psychosocial services that were approved to be needed.

I am especially proud of working with EMO Nova Scotia and the network that we assembled here at the JEOC. All the EMO staff, as you say, were wonderfully supportive. This here JEOC works, and is an example for other jurisdictions across Canada. I just got back from Toronto where I was meeting with my directors from across the country and who are still experiencing problems in BC and Newfoundland where they have problems. I believe they are envious of the type of system that we do have here.

All the groups that we worked with around the table, especially the groups that we worked closely with: the Power Corp I think did an amazing job under those trying conditions; Transportation; Department of Health is our close partner in normal times in preparing for emergencies; Communications Nova Scotia, it was tremendous working with you and our communications people; OCIPEP and the federal partners that we had; our military; Aliant; the Home Builders Association with the electricians; Food Inspections groups; the fire inspections; RCMP; Natural Resources; and the Municipalities that we worked with so closely; and the call centres to help support and to help staff.

The last thing, of course, is lesson's learned. We learned a lot of lessons, we know what we have to do. It is very humbling to know that we are not even near what we want to do, and what we want to do is to be prepared although we feel we did a wonderful job. There is still so much to do. We need to assist Red Cross with our partnerships in building up the capacity for food and the five services and the psychosocial services with groups such as the Psychologists Network, CISM Network, and the churches and Salvation Army. We want to help them build up their volunteer capacity and provide training. We have massive amount of training to do, to build up our training especially of the leaders. We have no shortage of people who want to volunteer, but we have to make sure that we have leaders that can get them to the proper places.

We need to talk and network with our Municipal, Provincial, Federal and NGO's in advance of emergencies to understand each other's abilities and strengths and to be clear on who does what in the emergency world.

We need to be sure we have the process down in emergencies to ensure that all local resources are used before we get the provincial resources for help, and all provincial used before we ask the federal level for help.

We know we asked the military to help with the food banks and some of the small emergencies and they also helped put seniors or vulnerable people who are suffering from illness such as cancer who was in a building that was without power, put them at Stadacona.

But at times it became tempting to ask them when they were right across the table from us as opposed to going to our local resources. So something you have to be aware of.

But if the Federal Government does have staff and they want to help how do we get them and access them without probably using as many stringent protocols as we need. It is a delicate balance.

We do need generators available for our shelters and we will coordinate that, I believe, with the municipalities as well as we use their shelters.

What happened at the Sportsplex, we had a number of people there and we had no power, no heat, no lights for people, and that was our lessons learned from our staff. It was very difficult escorting people to the washrooms with just maybe a small flashlight and that was it.

We have to ensure that at JEOC here that we take in adequate support staff to help answer our phones. There was a number of times our phones were not covered. Or to fax, to do leg works reports and logs.

The calls at the 1-800 number Red Cross and Municipal EOC, had calls for food, support, accommodations. They need to establish, in our social assistance office as well. What happens is we used the call centres too long and we should have referred people back to the social assistance offices because they were becoming dependant on the 1-800 numbers and the EOC's instead of calling the social assistance office that were inundated with calls and voice mail.

So we found that was looped back and that became a communications problem. So we have to communicate better with Communications Nova Scotia, our partners, and to ensure we are all on the same wavelength. It was a huge system to help harness.

The last thing, I know we need to work smarter and not harder as the adage goes. There is never a lack of people, as we said, and emergency preparedness is really, it is big business. And we are only hitting the tip of the iceberg of what we want and what we need to do, thank you very much.

THE CHAIR Thank you, John. Any other questions there?

ERNEST FAGE John, the response from Red Cross and Community Service, certainly was -- it was a huge effort and you handled it extremely well through the emergency phases and getting on the ground and identifying where the need was and those type of things.

The one issue that I didn't hear as a recommendation though was a policy issue concerning Community Service clients, what you would do as a review within your department, so there was possibly a re-establishment on the standard policy in regard to what type of monetary systems would be available for food loss or those types of things. I think many of us encountered a situation where it was four or five days out and the policy seemed to have changed a couple of times over those days. Would there be any consideration for the Department looking at what their standard policy response would be if a situation like this develops again? That is not on the emergency response, on the ground delivery, it is in that on-going role of how they would treat their own clients.

JOHN WEBB Thank you, it is certainly something that we'll look at. It is difficult because we didn't want to go near the compensation issue and what that would open up. What we ended up doing and the staff worked very hard at trying to use the existing policy, meaning the assistance we gave for food was based on the food rate that is already established. Even though it is difficult because someone might have got $150 and next door that seemed like the same situation maybe only got $120. So it was difficult, but we used the same policies. Once we explained it as time went on. But I think there is more we can do than to certainly look at our policies in that regard.

ERNEST FAGE That's what I meant that caused some confusion and it made it difficult because that got mixed in with emergency response. If we had a standard policy on that up front and it moved two or three different marks and in discussions with your department we were able to establish. But that was the mark that you could move off, but it took a number of days to get there and if we had had that as the standard policy response, they would have kept that mix out of the emergency clients and service you were delivering.

JOHN WEBB We talked about a number of things like that during the year 2000, Y2K and all of that. But I think we have to re-address to look at this closer.

ERNEST FAGE Thanks.

JOHN WEBB Thank you.

THE CHAIR Anything further, please, for Emergency Social Services? [no response] Thank you. Paul Pettipas, please, Nova Scotia Home Builders Association.

PAUL PETTIPAS

NOVA SCOTIA HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

Thank you, Mike. I represent private industry and we are in the minority this morning, but I am very proud of the way that my association took the lead in this. What I would like to do is maybe give you a little time line of that first week because my comments are going to come as an individual and also as an association.

The first couple of days I had no knowledge of this group that is in this room. I really had little or no knowledge other than the fact I had about 60 trees down in my lot in Fall River Village. I had no power, I had no heat, luckily I had water. My first stage was survival. My wife, and God bless her, she took the storm seriously, my son and I didn't. So my wife had the batteries and everything else she needed and for the last two weeks we've been very humble in our praise of her because we didn't take it seriously and I think that's one thing that I saw in the store. Many people did not take this seriously. So the first two days of mine was basically survival.

I went back in to the Home Builders' office on Wednesday, although I had been in on a few other occasions, there was no power.

The first thing we as an association did was our mandate to educate the public. We put out a media release called "Hurricane Hits Home Owners Beware." The problem in a situation like this, as we all know, a lot of good comes out of it. But then again there are some people in this world who like to take advantage. What we had to get across to the public was, you still have to be aware. If you have damages, you can't get someone to fix it who makes it worse. This was picked up by the news media. It was picked up by The Daily News, it was picked up by The Herald where things like Prudence Urged Among Repairs. The Herald as our media partner also posted an advertisement called "Home Owners Beware" where we said things like check and see if they are members of a Professional Association, check with the Better Business Bureau. This is when people started seeing the repair. Get it in writing, ask for a written contract.

We got calls of people saying should someone be looking for a 50 percent deposit and in our opinion, no.

Others were saying is it fair for a tree to be cut down for $2,000. Again, we said no, we don't think so. So the fact of the matter is, our concern was to let people know that even if you're in the middle of an emergency you got to use your head. I was on CBC Noon for about 15 minutes and you know the person on the other end kept saying, well, what about if there's a hole in the roof, I've got to get anyone and anybody to fix it. My response was, if they don't fix it right, now you have two problems. You paid someone and you still got a problem. So that was the first part.

The second part of it was a call I received from Bill Weagle out of the blue, I think it was on a Wednesday or Thursday saying, we're looking for some electricians can you help us. And I think that showed a strength in good luck and then a weakness. The good luck was basically I think you had called CANS first Construction Association of Nova Scotia and they say look, we don't have a lot of contact with electricians but try the Home Builders, that was the luck. The misfortune and the weakness was, and here's one of my points is we have a lot of non-for-profit associations out there and I say Nova Scotia Construction Association. I'm the past Chair, 20 people employed, tremendous data base for skilled labour - for plumbers, for electricians, for workers, right, we didn't use them. CANS again, I guess my point is, Nova Scotia Home Builders, we have to have I think a pool, a resource, where we can bring in these non-for-profits. We want to help but I think a lot of us -- if I hadn't received a call I don't think I would have realized you needed electricians.

From that point we then opened our offices. We worked with Bill Weagle, we worked with the International Brotherhood of Electricians. What we did is we set up a call line where the community, I guess, the provincial line would take calls from people who needed an electrician. Our 1-800 line then took calls from electricians who were willing to help. We helped some, but surprisingly most of the people who phoned just wanted a voice, and I mentioned this before. They just wanted to talk to someone and say I've tried this, I've tried this, what can I do. So we gave a lot of other advice out.

So I guess my first point is, there's a tremendous resource out there and the Nova Scotia Home Builders would be pleased to work with Emergency Measures and whomever to build that into a resource. So when something happens we can phone five or ten key people and say look we need plumbers, we need electricians, we need carpenters, where are we going to get them.

So, Mr. Minister, that's on the table. So I think the strength was, we found the home builders, and we found you. The weakness was we shouldn't have required it in the first place, it should have been there.

The other thing we found is, and this is a recommendation I will give. Many of the people that phoned us, talked about the difficulties with getting a hold of Nova Scotia Power, and we've discussed that before. My recommendation there was if you have a system which sort of puts people on hold, if you could incorporate something that says you will be on hold for 2.5 hours because of the long delay. At least we can get on with our lives. This is what I learned in the first couple of days. Again, now I am going to my first couple of days as a survivor. When I made the calls, the first time I waited, then was cut off. I know you had some technical difficulties. But if someone had said to me at that time while I was in between phoning them and cutting the 60 trees that were all over, but didn't damage house, then I could have got on with my business.

The other thing I find, and I discussed this with Bill Weagle, is if we had a template for announcements and I suggest 8, 12, 4 and 7. If we had this at the front of the telephone book that said in emergencies you will get your public announcements at 8, 12, 4 and 7.

Then the batteries that people had that we're trying to save, you wouldn't be listening all day. What we were doing again is cutting trees, getting the barbecue set up so we could eat. Since I left the barbecue run out of propane, I spent the day trying to get some propane. So if we had that and everybody knew, Mike, that okay when it happens that if your radio works, if your television works, that there will be so many announcements per day. You can go about your lifestyle but get back if you want to hear information. Again, that was one of my survival mode ones.

So I think all in all, what I have learned from this is my members were quite willing to help. Many of our home builder members actually pulled in all of their staff and phoned all of their clients from up to ten years back and said do you have a problem, have you lost siding? They weren't saying it in the basis of we are going to charge you, they volunteered their time. I know one of my members, White Stone Developments, took the lead on that. They found all the generators they had and then donated it to some of their past customers.

So I think there is this tremendous resource there and these people are not out just for money. We realized that we are very fortunate to be in HRM and in Nova Scotia our industry is rather prosperous. We don't mind giving back. But those are the things I think we have to -- I think the association I see around this table of basically the public service people, I think you do a heck of a good job. Looking at it from an outsider, I was amazed at how you could be all of these resources. But then I see you have got a plan. Now we have got to get a resource that brings private enterprise in.

From the other point of view of our association, we can also help in other ways and again I was very proud that my association -- and we work with the Metro Food Bank. They're sort of some people we've helped in the past and Diane Swinimer knows where to find us and I know Diane was quoted in an article, was saying, "Mr. Pettipas made the mistake of saying to me at a function if you ever need help call." My background is, I don't say that without meaning it so in the middle of this I happened to drop into the food bank to say to Diane, look Diane, how you doing, you know, and basically Diane said, Well, other than having no money and the shelves are bare, you know we're doing great. I made five phone calls to four of my larger developer members - Cresco, Kiel, Provident and who is the last one because I don't want to miss them, let me just see here. Greater, Cresco, Kiel, Provident and the Central Nova Local and raised $25,000 which we donated to the food bank. That was done for two things, one my board felt that was the thing to do. The other thing we wanted to do was spur others. To say, okay, fine, you know, we need some things right now and one of them is, we need money. If you haven't been able to provide other things, if you haven't been a volunteer, if you haven't cut trees, give money.

Red Cross and I spoke on sort of getting some names of others who I felt were prime that could donate, but I think that is again another part of our mandate.

So I guess in summing up, I am proud of what our industry did. I just think we can do a lot better. I think we have to communicate better between public and private. I hope no one has sort of the idea that because they are private enterprise they only are in it for the money. We realized right off the bat, this was not a minor little storm, this was something that disrupted a lot of lives. And again, we felt that as an association, you take your good times and you help in the bad times, so thank you very much.

THE CHAIR Thank you very much, Paul. We appreciate your participation with us. Any questions please for the Home Builders?

I'd like to welcome Ken Kirkwood from Canadian Hurricane Centre. You fellows, we spoke often and from a distance so, thank you for coming this morning.

KEN KIRKWOOD

ENVIRONMENT CANADA, CANADIAN HURRICANE CENTRE

Thank you Mr. Minister and ladies and gentlemen around the table. I would like to just say that like everybody else in this room the Canadian Hurricane Centre suffered through Juan as well, even to the point that we evacuated our centre for a period of about an hour and 45 minutes during the height of the storm. But what needs to be said is to ensure EMO and the Minister, that Nova Scotians at no time were without weather services or services of a Canadian Hurricane Centre specialist.

Part of our contingency plan at that time was, we dispatched a specialist to the New Brunswick Weather Centre in Fredericton on the early morning hours of Sunday so that he was there well before the arrival of Juan. We also arranged for our other centres in New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador to take over our forecasting capabilities for the regular public and marine forecasting duties as well as the Department of National Defence Meteorological and Oceanographic Centre here in Dartmouth in the event that we would have to pass over services.

That contingency plan worked very well. We noted some problems with our contingency plans and like all plans they are living breathing documents. You develop them, you practise them, hopefully you never have to use them but when you do, you make the changes that are necessary.

With our respect to Emergency Measures Organizations, we have a very good working relationship with EMOs in the Provinces. They are one of our first customers that get warnings. They actually get them directly from us by message. We also contact them directly by phone when we feel necessary, or often they will contact us as well. However, it is important that we routinely be involved in conference plans when severe events happened. When this operation centre in this building started working around noon or 13:00 hours on Sunday the 28th we were called for a weather up-brief by the people sitting around for a telephone conference. At the end of that conference we requested that we be included in future conferences, I believe they were held every hour or every two hours, of which you obliged us, and I think that was a very important factor in allowing us to maintain current up-to-date meteorological and weather information which is very crucial for the landfall of Hurricane Juan. The timing and the location of landfall of Juan was very crucial to the HRM, particularly, and to other parts of Nova Scotia, as well as the timing of the storm surge which we see resulted in several instances that were developed as part of your contingency plan or your emergency measures response. So it was important that we be able to participate in that so that the deployment of emergency responses can be done or help in the deployment of that.

Not only pre-event but also post-event. I only can express that post-event situations are very important as well. We were very lucky in post-Juan that we had two very warm sunny days to help with cleanup and response. That is not always the case. Many of you in this room, including myself, who were without power for a long time. Towards the end of the week it was getting pretty cold in my house in the mornings. Quebec ice storm, several years ago, post weather event information was very critical. If this event had happened during the winter and people were without power, without heat or lights for a long period of time, it is very important that up-to-date meteorological information is available. Just a prime example in this area of the post snow storm during the Halifax Explosion. Again, a very critical point to be made.

Another issue that I think that EMO and meteorological service can work on and that's developing a messaging and or media lines to help citizens be able to respond correctly. EMO has that information at their fingertips. That is not something that the meteorologist would have at their fingertips. However, we are constantly in contact with the media. Hurricane Juan produced over 200 interviews with my staff before landfall. Now one month later there is not a day goes by that we don't have at least one interview with the media on Juan. So we are now talking in excess of 400 interviews already.

Hurricane Isobel, just a week prior to Juan, produced over 400 media interviews in my office as well. So I think it is a prime opportunity if we were to develop some messaging that would enable us to deliver the impact as well as the proper response mechanism, would be very helpful to citizens.

This is a system that works very well with the Provincial Departments of Health with regards to health messaging and air quality. It works very well and I think it would work very well with EMO as well. That is something that we should discuss in future.

Just one other final thing, Environment Canada and the weather services particularly, have a capability of reaching a large contingency of the public through a 24 hour and seven-day-a-week weather radio operation. We have an extensive network of automatic telephone answering devices and, as I mentioned as well, our extensive work with the media. I think this is a prime opportunity or prime mechanism that we could use and could have been used during Juan as well to get the messaging that I talked about earlier out to the public. It is there 24 hours a day.

Our response during Juan in regards to the black out, our UPS system worked very well, it was up and running within, well, we didn't even hesitate. It cut in immediately and we were able to continue to operate. We had some internal problems with the building that we're in it is not owned by the Government, it is private a building. So there were some issues with the generator in that building. But our own UPS system worked well and continuously throughout the event. Our contingency plan with providing services by relocating to other offices worked well as well. Thank you.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Ken. Anything for the Canadian Hurricane Centre, please? [no response] Okay, I am going to drag you on until about 11:00 here in the interest of the Minister's time here. I'd like to now turn please to Nancy Tower, for NSPI please.

NANCY TOWER

NOVA SCOTIA POWER

Thank you. Good morning everyone. It is hard to believe that just over four weeks ago on that Monday morning citizens in this area woke to see the devastation left in the wake of Hurricane Juan.

In the following days and weeks Nova Scotia Power, EMO and the Province and hundreds of other civilian and military personnel mounted a recovery effort on a level not seen perhaps since the Halifax Explosion.

I wanted to take a couple of minutes to review with you the big picture from a Nova Scotia Power point of view the impact on our transmission and distribution system. Then I will take a few moments to reflect on the working relationship with EMO during the recovery effort.

I think we would all agree that we knew the storm would be big, but we really had no idea of the level of damage that was to occur with winds reaching 140 to 170 kilometres per hour. The scope of the storm's devastation became clear to us as we moved through those first few days. This was a once in a 100 year event and caused the worse damage in our company's history to our system. The path of the Category 2 hurricane followed our transmission system, our backbone as well call it, from Halifax to Truro, and on through the Pictou County area. This interrupted the flow of about 600-700 megawatts of power on a system with our installed capacity of about 2200. At its peak up to 300,000 customers throughout HRM and northeast or central Nova

Scotia in our geography we call it northeast part of the Province, were without power as a result of the hurricane. The winds and falling tress knocked out 27 of our main transmission lines. On one line 320 foot steel structures actually crumpled. 117 distribution feeders were damaged or tripped off including 106, almost all of the ones in HRM. 31 major substations were affected.

There was massive damage to the distribution side of the system. We replaced 275 transformers, 760 power poles and 125,000 metres of conductor wire. In addition, hundreds of home owners sustained damage to the electrical connections to their homes.

The damage to the transmission and distribution system created significant challenges to our generation fleet as well. The Tufts Cove station in Dartmouth, which generates approximately 350 megawatts of power was forced to shut down that evening, on the evening of the 28th and into the 29th of September.

System operators at out control centre at Ragged Lake acted quickly to move the excess electricity from the other generating stations as customers began to trip off into New Brunswick and into other jurisdictions. This was vital and ensured that our generating fleet, the remaining generating fleet other than Tufts Cove, remained operational and was able to provide electricity to customers as repairs were completed and lines became energized. There was a potential issue with system stability that our operators were able to mitigate as a result of their actions.

So the recovery efforts began on Monday morning. Crews of scopers fanned out across affected areas to assess damage and provide information to aid in our overall restoration planning effort.

Power line technicians and tree trimming crews were quickly on the road, in fact, they were out prior to the storm hitting. We called them off and they continued on after it was safe to do so.

The immediate effort focused on restoring transmission lines and towers, substations and critical facilities as well as addressing safety hazards. Critical customers as identified by EMO and by ourselves were the first priority in the customer restoration effort.

By noon on Tuesday 50 percent of our customers were restored, by Thursday 85 percent were back on and by Friday 95 percent of our customers were restored. The final five percent of customers were those in the hardest hit areas where fallen trees and damage to the infrastructure was substantial. The last customers were restored on Sunday October 12th. As you know, the resources brought to this effort were immense. 300 field crews from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Maine supported our own staff, the Emergency Measures staff, Municipal staff and 2000 members of the Armed Forces.

In addition to the line crews, NSPI had tree trimming crews, pole setting and scoping crews and I should mention that all Nova Scotia Power employees pitched in to volunteer where needed during the effort.

This included, we had people volunteering at our call centre. NSPI people volunteering at our call centre, out on the streets, in what we began to call community liaison roles in our attempt to get more information to some of the communities that were hardest hit and much more.

As a company, we are very proud of the hard work of everyone involved in the restoration effort. But we did have many learnings from the event. Certainly providing information to our customers was a challenge and I know we have talked about that around this table. A lot of those recommendations are included in a report that we will be filing tomorrow with the Utility and Review Board, our regulator. So I am not going to concentrate on those. That report, when it is public will be posted on our website for anyone who is interested in seeing it.

I would really like to talk about the interaction between Nova Scotia Power, EMO and the Municipalities. We believe that those groups and the Province worked together very effectively during the crisis.

So I will take a moment to review the things that we believed worked well with the interaction of these organizations and areas where experience will now let us improve our operations on the next event. So let's start with the things I think we did well.

Certainly, the dedicated use of Emergency Operations Centre was the way to go. It provided a central location for meetings and created a central hub for planning. Having predetermined meeting times also allowed for appropriate planning and information gathering on our behalf. So we had the information ready for the meetings. The identification of available and additional resources with contact numbers allowed effective coordination of activities. We utilized the Department of Transportation signage, tree cutters, et cetera, as one example.

At the end of week one, as I said earlier, we sent community liaison officers into the hardest hit communities to provide information. In the future we could seek to more thoroughly coordinate that effort with EMO, HRM and perhaps do this through some of the community support centres.

What else could we do better in the future? A standard report-out format at these meetings would have ensured critical information was effectively, clearly and consistently communicated. We recognize that what constitutes critical infrastructure is a moving target in an emergency spanning days or weeks. That said, if we can develop a pre-determined EMO critical infrastructure list that covers most of the facilities and is kept current it will enable NSPI to dispatch crews more quickly in restoration activities. And certainly we'd be happy to participate in the development of this list.

As it relates to our coordination effort, overall, I think it would be useful to plan and practise how we do that in advance. So I think that the advantage of practising that would be useful.

NSPI's work management methodology, so our work management system and supporting outage management systems are centred around civic addresses. If EMO priorities and/or escalated requests, or priority requests, can include this information in future it would be helpful to support a timely response by us. In fact, we can actually map it in advance to our feeders and know where it is on our system. So the idea of getting those listed in advance and understanding where those facilities are, mapping it right to our distribution feeders, would certainly aid us in more quickly getting the restoration effort underway.

Teleconference options for meetings may have allowed us to participate remotely and provide our operations staff, who were immersed in the restoration effort, to participate from time to time, and to provide additional resources and input for planning. So that may have provided us with a greater opportunity if some of them had been by teleconference.

Finally, as I mentioned, we had scopers assess damage. It may have been useful to provide an early indication of the damage assessment to the EMO participants as an aid in your response. So we probably could have done a better job there.

This is a short list with many possibilities. I encourage your comments and feedback. I'm pleased to say that I think the working relationship we tested and lived during the hurricane is strong. We look forward to working with all of you on an on-going basis to improve both NSPI's and EMO's ability to respond in the future, thank you.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Nancy. Anything for NSPI, please? Paul Pettipas.

PAUL PETTIPAS Nancy, I am hoping in your report that comes out, as I said, the feedback we got was your outside crew people, thought they were fantastic. What I got from people in reading reports from the people we spoke to is something in the report going to plan something where -- I know that you can't plan one in a hundred years for your communications. I know in our industry when we build roads, we have to plan for one in a hundred years. We have to plan for the storm. Is there some way in your communications that you are going to be able to step it up? I know that you deal with a certain level where people go on hold and whatever. I know you were inundated. But again, the response came back from us to say if there would have been a way for us to leave a message or there would have been a more user friendly instead of being cut off in the centre. Is there going to be something come out that you're going to be upgrade in an emergency so that people feel that there's a little more response from your communications?

NANCY TOWER Thanks Paul. I would say that we don't have the solution yet, in terms of what our next step actions will be. Certainly, we realize that communication was an issue for us and I think I explained some of our technological problems at one of these meetings.

I think perhaps there were two issues though, one was the communications issue and the second one was the information issue. So actually having -- customers had a certain expectation of information and we need to probably get out in advance to provide some more information to customers sooner. So certainly we understand that those issue are there and we will be addressing them in the report. But we have not turned our attention to exactly what the solution will be at this point.

PAUL PETTIPAS Thank you.

THE CHAIR Anything else for NSPI, please? [No response] Thank you I'd like to turn over the Chair for the moment to our Minister, please.

THE HONOURABLE ERNEST FAGE Thank you very much, Mike. I apologize, I am going to have to leave the meeting before everyone has had a chance to put forward their views and make their statements. But I want to make a few comments in general.

I know this is an operational debrief but certainly from my perspective as the Minister responsible and certainly from the Province of Nova Scotia, I want to thank sincerely everyone in this room - they themselves, or the organizations, or staffs they represent.

No one I think could have foretold the force of Hurricane Juan and then the subsequent hard work efforts and really heroes among a lot of individuals, parts within your organizations, departments, or companies, that got this Province back-up and running really in record time.

Certainly, through the entire process, as Minister responsible, my objective was really three things. I looked at it as in the perspective of the safety of the people in the affected areas, their social comforts, and obviously justice or insurrection whatever you want to call it. But the stability and optimism in the population that their woes or their power, or their telephone, or their food, would be corrected as soon as possible because if the general population loses that optimism that their Government or their emergency organizations aren't in charge in moving that forward poor things tend to happen at that point. I really never saw a negative through that entire operation, whether I was working with department people here in the room or private industry, whether it was with federal officials or whether it was with municipal officials. Certainly I think the communications, if I touch on that for a minute next, is the key part to relaying that, yes, people working hard, please, you know have some patience, we're going to be there and you're going to be okay. I mean if you boil it down to standard messages, that is really where we are going. I think the most important thing, from my perspective, through an event like this is really accurate information, disseminated in a timely manner to the public. We've all talked around that a bit and with how we inform the public that, yes, we're there working on your behalf, whether it was volunteer or whether it was departments or whether it was companies such as Nova Scotia Power.

Nova Scotia Power's crews and the crews that come in, in my estimation, it was unbelievable what they were able to accomplish with such destruction and in such a short time. But the communications aspect for all of us, and myself as a spokesman, at the end of the day for everybody before the event, after the event and the cleanup will lie with EMO.

So we have been very cognizant of that in trying to work close with everybody and I wanted to again say how pleased I was with everybody's reaction because everybody managed for the common good and the objective. I think Nova Scotians are proud of the efforts they put in and when I am in the general public over the last several weeks, it is not negative comments they are saying about any organization, any group. They are proud of the efforts of people around this room and their organizations and they are proud of themselves. Going through a natural disaster, I don't think you can ask for anything more because it doesn't matter if it is done at the Legislature, at City Hall or in the House of Commons. We can pass a bill, but I don't think that will stop the hurricane, or at least it may have to delay the hurricane for a few months to get it through, but it is still not going to stop the event. So I wanted to make those points and sincerely thank you because this has been a one in a hundred year event for us. Certainly today's debrief is about, if we encounter this again, how can we improve on how we may advise people; how we deal with the situation when the circumstances occur; and how do we restore life to the closest sense of normalcy.

I will say one other thing, as a neophyte to Emergency Measures, when I look at the strength of Hurricane Juan, as a province we were extremely fortunate in the time the storm came to shore. If this had have been in these type of hours on this given day with even the amount of precaution warning that was taken, you know, certainly fatalities would have been much higher. With those buildings in Halifax that are populated during working hours and people trying to get home and the streets full, injuries certainly would, I hesitate to put a number on it, but they would have been extremely high. As a population we're very fortunate. Every circumstance of that storm hit at the right time of the day in the week to give us the largest possible advantage of, some people call it luck, but of having circumstances that we didn't have to deal with.

That being said the next one may hit at the worse possible timing and we still have to be ready to deal with it.

With those few remarks, again, I just want to congratulate you. Thank you on behalf of the Province and the people of Nova Scotia. You did a great job. A lot of people put a lot of effort that they never will receive credit for, but that's what being a hero is all about, so thank you very much.

THE CHAIR Thank you. Could we please take ten minutes, I'll be benevolent, ten after.

[RECESS]

THE CHAIR Okay, moving right along could we go to Halifax Regional Municipality, please, Barry Manuel.

BARRY MANUEL

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Thanks Mike, and good morning everybody. I am going to restrict my comments this morning to issues around Municipal/Provincial interactions.

Right now the Municipal debriefing process is still in progress and it would be inappropriate for me to make comments on any municipal issues or lessons municipally that we learned so far. That part hasn't happened yet.

But having said all that, teamwork and decision- making are two of the pillars of a strong emergency response disaster management program. If I was to speak on teamwork and decision-making in the joint EOC, I would have to say that they were categorically the best I have ever seen, and I could end there. However, not wanting to let a good opportunity slip, I have some other comments. I will start with the EOC operations. Both EOC's, which is the Municipal EOC and the Provincial Federal joint EOC were activated around the same time and were stood down around the same time, which is a testament to the support that the provincial level would provide to the municipality. The liaison between both agencies went well. The open-door approach worked well. I am suggesting, however, a written procedure to formalize some of our ad hoc operational features such as the practise of the exchanging liaison officers at sit. reps. I believe we should start to put this in writing only because some of the players that are here now may not be here much longer.

I think we would both benefit from a shared emergency contact phone directory that is normally made up during the event. These contact directors are ad hoc, they are not always the same every time because they use cell phones, they use various land lines. I think all agencies involved would benefit from that if it is shared.

The state of local emergency declaration process at the provincial to municipal level went well. The discussions were in hand before it was approved at the municipal level. That process went smoothly.

We need to solidify our security processes though and develop a joint action document that describes the access procedures to be followed, for staff and visitors, for all three of the EOC partners in future. So that all three partners can participate at an appropriate level.

We could benefit from more electronic sharing of information, whether it be situation reports, master event logs, other such material. I am recommending that we, being EMO Nova Scotia and HRM EMO, co-investigate the use of electronic EOC software, sometimes called virtual EOC or other such trade names, that would allow us to exchange information on a live basis.

I would like to comment a second on the use of the Department of National Defence Resources, the coordination of those resources, the activation process which can by time seem odd went well at the provincial/ federal levels. By the time that the military were ready to respond we had all the paperwork done. I thank Mike and Joanne for that effort to push that forward.

Environment Canada representation. We were well-informed with Environment Canada in our EOC municipally during the pre-hurricane event. We had good information. This hurricane, well, I would call it -- HRM was affected by the eastern eye of the hurricane. The eastern eye wall the hurricane in my thinking, which is a high wind situation and not as much rain. I believe we only got 85 millimetres or so of rain and mind you that is a lot of rain at one time. We have had a lot more in rain storms. We did have the high winds. Where that hurricane makes landfall is critical, whether you are on the eastern eye wall side or the western eye wall side. The information we got from the weather service, the Canadian Hurricane Centre, helped us formulate decisions as to how we were going to do our response.

It might be nice to talk about the possibility of having Environment Canada or Canadian Hurricane Centre representation here during a weather event. This is being talked about as a 100 year storm. I don't think it will be 100 years before we have the next one. With the way the weather patterns are changing, the Gulf stream is getting warmer, the Atlantic water getting warmer, I feel personally, that we'll have more hurricanes of this nature in the future. I hope, Mike, it is not before you retire but I suspect it will be definitely before I retire. Therefore, I would like to talk more with Canadian Hurricane Centre on weather-related emergencies.

On the response side, this comment is through you Mike, but it goes to the Department of Community Services. DCS responded very well from within their mandate as they have in the past. I believe though we need to formalize the relationship between the DCS and the Municipality for the provision of Emergency Social Services.

Since amalgamation the Municipality has provided emergency shelters when needed and the DCS has provided the other four essential emergency social services, which are food, clothing, registration inquiry and personal services with their partners. This has worked very well in the past, but I believe it is only because of the desire and the personalities of the responding staff from both DCS, Red Cross and the Municipality.

I am recommending that DCS and the HRM co-write a protocol that sets a procedure to provide ESS or Emergency Social Service in the Municipality. Then it can be made part of our public awareness programs and education so that families and individuals will know where to turn in these times.

I would also like to see more basic emergency measures management courses, you knew that was coming. I would like to see more municipal seats on these courses and partly because of training our staff on emergency management procedures but also the basic emergency management course is the requirement to get to the federal courses at the Canadian Emergency Preparedness College in Ottawa which is the EOC course and the emergency site management courses. For those of you that don't know in the room, those two courses are the identically same management structure that we employ at HRM for our staff.

I observed in the EOC, the people who had been to the course at the college in Ottawa responded easier to the management style we were using than people who we were bringing in who had not had that training. So I would like to see more municipal seats at the Canadian Emergency Preparedness College to allow that information to grow.

Talking a little bit about resources. Knowing where resources were at any given time before and during the emergency is a critical part of our process. I would like to see us talk about joint resource sharing and asset tracking during an emergency. I have lost material in previous events. I was lucky not to loose a lot of material this time and I am sure the Province may or may have not lost material. I believe we need to have some joint asset tracking especially when you start talking high ticket items such as generators on wheels.

Our 911 centre and our corporate call centre, as were other call centres, were overwhelmed with the calls from people. I believe we need to work on joint messaging to ensure that we do not give the impression for people to make inappropriate calls to the 911 centres. That is our critical life line for emergencies and we had issues with our 911 centre where they were overwhelmed with non-essential calls.

So I believe as part of our public affairs programs with other municipal and provincial federal non-governmental units is that we do some joint messaging in emergencies to make sure we can offload some of the 911 calls.

The employee alerting during the emergency went well. The HRM, Province and the Federal Government did a joint messaging asking people who are non-essential to stay home for Monday and Tuesday. It was nice to see that come out as a joint message. Having said that, we need to have some discussions as to what is an essential employee at a given time. We had some confusion as to a few people thought they were essential and some people thought that they weren't.

We also need to look at our public alerting, during an emergency. HRM has an emergency evacuation plan and it has an emergency public information plan that deals with alerting of the public. I believe we need to talk to the Province to ensure that our public alerting pre-emergency and at the start of an emergency are consistent and we come at it from a joint media approach, which is the style we have used in the past but I'd like to see that more formalized.

One of the things we can do with that is last year we had a public affairs, a public information officers, workshop. It was highly attended and highly successful. I would like to see that continue in the next year dealing around pubic messaging.

Trunk Mobile Radio with Aliant. I have been a critic of the TMR system since it started. I have to say I am impressed with it, it worked well during the emergency. Aliant had issues. They were treated with a proper priority. They were resolved and I am proud to say that I am a strong supporter of the TMR system.

In closing, this is on a personal note for myself, to you, Mike, and to your staff, I want to thank you for the work and the support you provided the Municipality especially the EOC staff during the operation and I appreciate that, and thank you.

THE CHAIR Thank you very much, Barry. Anything for Halifax Regional Municipality, please?

JOHN WEBB Mike, John Webb here, Community Services. I just wanted to mention specifically about the exemplary attention that HRM does in preparedness for emergencies. We appreciate being apart of that. The comment about the letter to municipalities or information with the municipalities advising what Community Services will do, especially since the takeover of Social Services a number of years ago, that is in the process. I know we have said that in the last while but the letter is done internally. We have hashed it out and studied it and now have conclusive information that it will be going to the cabinet within the next number of days. We'll have something definitive to the municipalities. So I appreciate the prompting, it should be very soon resolved and I think that will help clarify.

THE CHAIR Thank you John. Mike Myette, please.

MIKE MYETTE I think the point about the training that Barry made here are well taken and we as EMO have identified some issues with the Ottawa base training and the number of seats that are typically available for people from Nova Scotia. Based on those concerns we have made strategic decisions to deliver Emergency Operations Centre and Emergency Site Management here on our curriculum. We will be moving forward with those courses here which is going to provide an enhanced level and a greater ability for more people to attend training.

THE CHAIR First step will be to hire [illegible] training officer, right. Anything else please, for HRM? I will turn to Emergency Health Services please, Tony Eden.

TONY EDEN

NS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH/EMERGENCY HEALTH SERVICES

Good morning, I am Tony Eden, the Director of ground ambulance for the Emergency Health Services branch of the Department of Health and also a Departmental Emergency Preparedness Officer. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to participate in this debriefing session and pass along comments from the EHS system.

EHS began preparing for this hurricane some 72 hours before it hit landfall in Nova Scotia. Although we had a minimal response role compared to other agencies, we did have regular interaction with many of the other agencies in this room. Our major obstacle to routine operations was some delays in response time due to damage done by the hurricane as well as some unusual requests for service.

From an EHS point of view, we considered the overall response to Juan to be very good. The inter-agency cooperation, participation in the JEOC and their team spirit was excellent.

A couple of things that worked well. We view the proactive response of EMO and the HRM, including declaring the local state of emergency, to have saved lives. This action provided a vehicle for emergency and public safety agencies to better perform their duties.

In addition, the JEOC between OCIPEP, the Province, and the Municipality provided necessary liaison and information sharing within the EHS/EOC and EHS field operations. Without this forum the coordination of response would likely have been much more difficult.

We did also identify some opportunities to enhance the coordinated response when an event like this happens. I'm with Barry, I do believe that it will happen, it is not matter of "if" it is a matter of "when".

Firstly, a coordinated and staged, either day by day or hour by hour, checklist, if you will, of actions to be taken by the partnering agencies in the hours before a predictable event such as a hurricane would be helpful. This would provide a detailed inventory of actions to be taken in the days to hours leading up to a response and also help ensure that no steps are missed. We had discovered just shortly before it hit landfall that we got a phone call saying we wish you had called us. A checklist not unlike a pilot would do before, you know, the days, hours and minutes before take off would help us to not miss anything.

Secondly, and this is where the system, the EHS system was really taxed, we were taxed with normally out of scope services for an EHS system in our community. With the delayed resumption of electricity a number of patients were required to call 911 for support when their home medical services were disrupted. Some of these health clients in the home were unable to secure the necessary medical supplies such as oxygen, but not restricted to oxygen, and turn to the EHS system for support.

EHS assigned exclusive resources in the days after Juan to support these clients in their homes. The response to a lengthy power interruption would be enhanced if, number one, through EMO the response system would identify civic addresses that require electricity to support home health services. It may be the residence of a home oxygen client or perhaps a business address of a home medical support service.

Secondly, as the communities rely more and more on these private medical support service companies consideration should be given to requesting or requiring these key resources to have an all-hazards disaster plan and a business resumption plan. This would help to reduce the dependency on public safety agencies such as the EHS system and fire department and medical-first responder services. This would allow people to stay in their homes, not have to call 911 and have the necessary medical support services.

Mr. Chair, we offer these comments to the group as an opportunity to learn from Juan as well as an invitation to work with partnering agencies to provide safety for Nova Scotia.

THE CHAIR Thank you very much, Tony. Any questions please, for EHS? [no response] Thank you very much. Moving along to David MacLeod, Department of Environment and Labour, please.

DAVID MACLEOD

NOVA SCOTIA ENVIRONMENT AND LABOUR

Thank you Mr. Chair. David MacLeod from Environment and Labour and the fire service on behalf of Bob Cormier, who was unable to attend today. You are probably going to get a much shorter version than usual.

As you know, this group that is assembled at the table are brought together here to review and solve problems and issues that arise as a result of emergency situations. With regard to Hurricane Juan, we believe that this was achieved in a very effective manner.

There were a few issues that we would like to discuss. First, present EMO information booklets cover a large amount of information on various subjects that should be done under emergency conditions. But since people absorb that information on an as-need basis, we should try to get that amount of information, which is usually larger booklets, into a more limited and summarized manner. I know personally that when I was last over here a long time ago I grabbed about six booklets on almost every other condition, you know, driving in the snow, this and that. But those are very detailed books and most people would not have the time to read those or to absorb all of that information. Possibly summarizing some of the key issues in that would be most beneficial. Such items such as boiling water, use of generators, even contact names and numbers that emergency personnel would be able to hand out the specific information sheets for a specific situations would be very useful.

We must also continue to maintain and expand upon the ability to have flexibility for volunteers to move from one discipline to another. Example would be the fire fighters, who I believe were assisting Community Services and Red Cross. The issue of using Government personnel who were unable to go to their office to work, to assist with various organizations, should be considered. Communications with individual fire departments, does need improvements and this will be addressed and is being reviewed.

Our department coordinated and made every effort with Nova Scotia Power to ensure that power could be restored as soon as possible for that part which we had jurisdiction over, i.e., the incoming service repairs and replacement.

I would like to note that, as the Chief Electrical Inspector for the Province, I made sure that any process made with Nova Scotia Power to facilitate and expedite getting permits and inspections, that safety was kept paramount and foremost. At no time was this issue considered to be bypassed to allow a quicker connection of power to a business or home. Therefore, we made every effort to ensure that we were able to expedite it but no safety measures were ever kept off the table.

Our department will continue to review and work on policies and procedures with the electrical utilities to ensure that during emergency conditions procedures are in place and that safety is always foremost. I believe that Dr. Scott will be addressing a few items on water-related issues than are somewhat common between the two departments. And with that said, that's it, thank you.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Dave. Any questions, please, for

Environment and Labour? Okay, moving along to Department of Education, please, Paul MacLellan.

PAUL MACLELLAN

NS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Good morning, I'm Paul MacLellan, Regional Director with the Department of Education. I'm representing Mr. Gerald Muise, who is unable to be here this morning, and as David said, I'll be much briefer than Mr. Muise would have been.

The Department of Education was required for only a minor role in this particular emergency. But we are certainly interested in hearing, around the table, where our schools and bus fleets may have been of use certainly in a reactive but moreso in a proactive manner in this emergency and future ones.

There was only one call received by Mr. Muise for a school bus and, unfortunately, he was out of town at the time. He was uncertain if the bus was actually obtained or the need was extinguished. He didn't really know and I thought it was perhaps important that communication-wise that perhaps a follow-up be done there to make sure that, anybody called like that does know, that if they are not there. that something else had been done so that they don't feel that there's a loose end.

With respect to the future, the question of the need for generators in some schools has arisen again. As part of the design of new schools, we don't provide generators in them at the present. Although we are building schools everyday in the Province of Nova Scotia. The cost of putting some generation capacity in a school when it is being built, of course, is the time to do it, it is the minimum cost then. We certainly aren't promoting an increase in cost of school construction but I am hearing around the table where a power generation is a very important component in any emergency and certainly schools in the communities are our focal point and they are a place of refuge for people who may need a place to be.

Certainly, generation capacity could, in a school, run the lights, run the heating systems, of course, and perhaps the cafeteria as well. So there is great capacity in there to help out in an emergency. We are also thinking that even if generators weren't put in, but if the switching was put in so that a generator on wheels could be connected to the school quite easily, this might be helpful as well.

In fact, we do in a lot of schools install diesel engines right now that we use for emergency fire protection. It seems to me that the need to extend that to possible power generation in that school wouldn't be out of the question.

Again, I don't know the funding situation with regards to that, but it is something that I think should be looked at as an asset in a future emergency. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Paul. I would strongly recommend that discussions go forward between the Department and the various Municipal Emergency Measures Organizations where the schools are located. There are some considerations for funding through the Federal Government that may come in to play if schools are being considered for emergency relocation centres. There may even be some advantages for both of those discussions but it would be at the municipal level where that would be critical. Barry, please, Barry Manuel.

BARRY MANUEL One comment regarding that. I also believe we need a standard on power transfer boxes for generators, that if you are bringing mobile generators in they will fit various locations. Also, for the optimum use of the generator and also to protect the linemen who are working on these power systems from power going backwards through it, both at the governmental level but also at the home-owner level. I meant to make that comment before and I forgot. But if you have a lot of people putting in generators now and if they don't have the proper transfer systems in their homes then you are energizing or potentially energizing the lines within. I think maybe that is an issue that the Provincial EMO might be able to a take a lead on.

THE CHAIR Thank you, actually Nova Scotia Power, about three years ago did that work. It has already been done. I think it is a matter of going back and finding it. The discussion had taken place after the ice storm of '98 and I am searching my memory now for the Departmental Emergency planning officers from NSPI today, John [inaudible] No, before him. Anyway we can probably get that off-line but the material was prepared in the form of a pamphlet on what needs to be done and how to do it properly. Anything else Department of Education, please? [no response] Well, to Agriculture and Fisheries please, Mike Horwich.

MIKE HORWICH

NS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

Good morning, yes, it is still good morning. Mike Horwich, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. I manage the Provincial Food Safety program and I also have the role of a alternate Departmental Emergency Preparedness Officer.

Our activities at the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries involved two main fronts. One dealing with the resource industries of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the other front was dealing with the issue of food safety, particularly relating to the public.

In terms of the resource industries, both industries had major infrastructure damage through the path of the storm. Our staff were quite active in assessing and assisting the industry individuals with trying to keep up and running on a day-to-day basis. Particularly in the agriculture, setting animal welfare issues were a priority for us. The very good thing about the agriculture industry is they provide each other with a lot of mutual support. Very quickly the dairy farmers, who had a lot of issues associated with power outages as it went through our main dairy-producing area in the Province, were able to keep up and running with the help of their colleagues throughout the Province and in other provinces. The main issue there was generators, large enough capacity generators, to keep their milking operations going. The milking operations not only meant the milking machines but the coolers where the milk would be deposited. There was sampling, testing, done on milk product throughout this storm, as well. This is a public safety issue and routine for the industry. That did not stop. There was a significant amount of milk dumped during that time.

It appears that the fishing community heeded the warnings quite well, the warnings of the storm quite well. I think that is because of their historical need to heed those types of warnings. They appeared a little bit more prepared and this was nice to see. There is still significant infrastructure damage there, but the fact that there was no loss of life, particularly in that area, was significant and speaks well to that.

I would like now to turn to the food safety and public messaging concerning food, if I may. The food safety staff received about 1700 phones calls on a food safety line which we quickly established. Now this line was established on a really quick ad hoc basis, it just happened. We made the decision let's use this particular line, and we're going to put all our messages through this. I will speak a little bit later on some other areas we may be able to improve on with that particular event.

The Boy Scout motto of "Be Prepared" -- I was in Boy Scouts for many, many years and I always had this motto and I didn't know what it meant until this storm. About three years ago there was a suggestion from our staff to put together an information pamphlet on food safety if your power goes out. There was a lot of work put into it and there was some nice letters written thanking the people who did it, then it went on the shelf but it also went on the website.

At the time the power went out we referred to this document. This document was instrumental in our decision-making, the basis of our decision-making and our consistent messaging to the public and to industry. In terms of communications, those media that did have access to power, were referred directly to our website. The private media did a tremendous job in terms of getting this information out in the papers and over the radio.

Communications Nova Scotia, in the whole food safety messaging was extraordinary in their support, their editing abilities particularly because that is not my strength. The support that they gave to us in proactive messaging and progressive messaging to the public was tremendous.

I anticipated to see an increase in food-borne illness - that did not occur - which speaks to the responsibility of the individuals in dealing with food issues and the communications that we put out. I have nothing but praise for those people at Communications Nova Scotia helping us out with that.

What we did well. We provided a quick response and good progressive information. We moved from, what do you do with your food if your power's out for six hours, to

12 hours to, oh, it is too late for the refrigerator, to let's cover the freezer with blankets and sleeping bags. Let's check that. Oops, a little bit late for that stuff, you're going to have to throw that out as well. So these progressive messages were very, very effective.

We provided evening coverage, union issues, staffing issues, home personal issues for our staff. Everyone pitched in on our staff that possibly could and there wasn't any questions asked. They knew that this was something that they had to do for public health and safety.

We were able to give, based on our information that we had collected in the past, quick assessment for individuals who had specific questions on food. We answered the phones well. We gave good concise advice, and based on the feedback a number of the inspectors and specialists said that they had never heard "thank you" so many times in their career as they did during that week. That was due to the fact that I think people wanted to hear some stability, someone who knew something. Someone that was able to say, "Yes, you can keep your ketchup." Everything else goes, but you can keep your ketchup. People just wanted to hold onto something - a bottle of ketchup.

Again, what was done well was this, the EMO, and the region from the municipal level and provincial level, we found that tremendous. This facility itself helped us to really deal with the metro issues separate from the other provincial issues, which helped us keep focused in our various areas. So we had a control centre in our Halifax office and one here for the rest of the Province. It worked tremendous.

How could we improve? Well, I think I will say we had the same issue as the RCMP had in terms of helping our own staff. They worked too hard. They really worked too hard. They were tired. We were all tired but they were drained. The individuals that were answering the phone are typically free-wheelers. They are in the office for a half an hour in the morning and they are gone. Well, now they are stuck on the end of a phone for hours on end and they don't know how to deal with it. You can bring in coffee and you can bring in muffins but what they needed was fresh air, to go outside. We didn't see that enough. We didn't give them the breaks. They took breaks when they needed it but it is the type of relaxation that they needed to keep going a little further. They drained themselves. By the end of the week they were unable, I would suggest, unable to do weekend duty on the phones. They were that mentally and I think physically drained from that particular activity.

Now we had a tremendous support from the rest of the Province and the other inspectors pitched in and our phone bill is going to be out of site. Maybe we can talk later. We were returning calls from Sydney and Yarmouth to Halifax because these were the main areas of inquiry.

One of the things --

MIKE MYETTE DFA, Mike.

MIKE HORWICH Pardon me?

MIKE MYETTE DFA, Disaster Financial Assistance, will look after the phone bill.

MIKE HORWICH Oh, yes, thank you very much.

MIKE MYETTE As long as we can attribute it to the disaster.

MIKE HORWICH Oh, we are including everything. We are even going to try and include that fresh air that I was talking about.

The review of what can we improve. Again, any emergency we will need a review of our emergency plan. What we could have improved upon is more timely and accurate information from other agencies such as Community Services and HRM.

Community Services in terms of we could have helped out a little bit better with your messaging too because the messages, the calls that came in were to do with food. They were sometimes food safety, sometimes food security, trying to obtain food. So if we had a little quicker information, that way we could help out. We did get it toward the end when we talked a little bit more, but that is an area that we can improve upon with HRM. The disposal of food, that was another issue with the green bin and how are you going to do it right. Then we had issues of people of raiding those green bins, as well, in taking food out. It takes all kinds. However, I think we will look at those types of areas for future improvement as well.

Additional phone lines. We are going to need additional phone lines in the future to deal with this type of situation and possibly an alternate location. It was difficult to get to downtown Halifax in that first couple of days for some of our staff. I don't know how we will deal with this one, but this came from staff. They would like some way of feeling less stress so they can give more time to the seniors when they called in for food safety information. They wanted to give more time, but they couldn't, there was so many phone calls. The seniors would just want to talk it seems and we had to move on.

I think the other thing that we could have done, as a Department possibly, and certainly as a manager of a section, I could have paid more attention to the warnings that were given. I don't think I gave my full attention. If I gave as much attention as those people in the fishing community I think we would have been able to respond a little quicker. We did really well, but maybe we could have been even a little bit more prepared to address that.

What surprised us. The number of calls surprised us. The 1700 calls - it was amazing. The fact that we didn't set up a toll free number, again, we'll talk about the toll free number business and phone. I think that would have helped us but it surprised us that nobody thought about that until a little bit later. That might have helped with issues outside of the metro area, in terms of dealing with those calls.

We needed to review the information we were giving to the public every few hours, because as different food products go through different processes to be made, they also degraded in different time frames and when we had to make sure that our messaging was consistent to deal with those specific food products.

We were surprised at the types of questions and concerns, and not all of them were emergency related, such as, well, I have some things in my freezer, I have things in my refrigerator, oh, by the way you know about that store down on the corner, you know, I think the guy is dirty in there. You know, those types of things so it is the general other things. It was nice to know that people are getting on with their lives and they are interested in general cleanliness but, you know, the sky is falling this time so we had to deal with that. That surprised us.

Again, I was personally surprised by this excellent facility and the excellent support from the EMO staff.

In terms of recommendations: we are going to be reviewing our emergency plan; we are going to consider off site location for our Halifax staff, an alternate location, maybe this location will be best in the next event but we may want to have a fall-back position there; more phone lines; information on saving food; alternate phone numbers for emergency; try and get more staff involved; I think to try and get, provide more public information, more frequently and year round; and to broadcast an early warning if we can link in on that.

Issues that came from the phone, phone messages or throwing out food in green bin collection, refreezing fruits and vegetables, other foods for refreezing. A tremendous lot of questions about eggs. We noted a definite change in attitude over the week from "What do I do?" to in nice terms to, "Oh, you don't mean I have to do this," to people getting very frustrated and saying, well, I don't care what you say I am going to eat it anyway. That's another strange one.

Our role did not stop at when all once power was restored. Our role did not stop in terms of food safety. We had to follow-up to ensure that there were foods that had been stockpiled for insurance purposes and inventories were destroyed. We had to ensure that there were the foods that were all meant to have been destroyed were destroyed and not sold at various flea market type locations.

Again, the industry, we found the industry very, very responsible. There were a few people that had to be reminded they had to be more responsible, but the industry overall was very good.

I would just like to say in terms of the industry, particularly the food service and the retail food industry, that they appeared to appreciate our staff's contact with them, whether we went out and saw them or whether we contacted them by phone, it was greatly appreciated. It was a tremendous learning experience for our Department. I think we did put our best foot forward. There are things we can improve upon as I have mentioned. We will be, as the Boys Scouts are, being prepared for the next event. Thank you.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Mike. Anything for Agriculture and

Fisheries, please? [No response] Somebody questioned awhile back, well why did you have your briefings at 9:00 and 3:00 during the day. That was to ensure that Mike wouldn't be doing it just before lunch. It was an education, Mike, thank you.

MIKE HORWICH Oh, you're quite welcome.

THE CHAIR To the Department of Health, please, Dr. Jeff Scott.

JEFF SCOTT

NS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Hi, Dr. Jeff Scott, Provincial Medical Officer of Health and Departmental Emergency Preparedness Officer, Nova Scotia Department and Health. I will come back to issues around a dual role as part of the presentation.

The roles of the health system during Hurricane Juan are in many areas: obviously care of the sick is an important area and the stresses in the system were related to power outages and in collaboration with the Emergency Health Services and individuals at home, working through our home care system; responding to damage to major hospitals, which involved transfer of individuals and planning for how you deal with elective and emergency situations and dealing with other on-going basic services.

It involved public health measures, it involved collaboration with our partners, in Environment and Labour and in Agriculture and Fisheries, what we call the public health issues of a disaster: safe food; safe water; safe air, which could be an issue; and safe waste disposal.

The issue of surveillance or monitoring through emergency departments for increasing illnesses, be it gastrointestinal, diarrhoeal disease due to potential food poisoning. Looking for what injuries were occurring as a result of the hurricane or the result of people trying to fix things after the hurricane. Looking at any increase in things such as chest pain or other areas. And in addition, one role we had not really anticipated was the issue of having to work with the family practise at GP's offices who were stressed in terms of power outages and the loss of products such as vaccines, which are very labile and very sensitive and have to be kept at a certain temperature. So we certainly had lost stock within our system.

Obviously, the health system in Nova Scotia, either because of accreditation or because of its requirements and Emergency Measures legislation continues to have disaster planning and disaster exercising, either at the institutional level, the district level, the provincial level or indeed at the multijurisdictional level. That is quite important because we have participated last year in a couple of multijurisdictional level exercises - Atlantic Tour, Atlantic Guard. We were a part of Atlantic Guard Two, yesterday. I think that was important because what that meant, that we had staff who had spent time as part of an EOC and actually had spent time in the centre here and that showed. What we have also used in the past and continued to use during Hurricane Juan was to send experienced staff together with non-experienced staff as basically a way of learning on the job or training, because sustainability becomes an issue and it was difficult to know how long things were going to go on for.

Yesterday, as I say, we participated in an exercise where all parts of the health system were involved. In addition to what we learned within our health system from Hurricane Juan, we are going to take our debriefings from that to continue to improve our all hazard disaster plan. Obviously relationships between different parts of the health system are important and we are looking at changes around that. One of the unanticipated events in the hurricane is we do have an Emergency Operation Centre in the Department of Health. That was set up the night prior to, however, the building damage and the power outage meant we could not use that. Our alternate site was in use at capital. So we certainly need to look at updating and refitting our EOC and having an appropriate backup.

We certainly have issues around how well we communicate between different parts of the health sector and communication at the start of an alert is important. One of the recommendations that we have is that the health system has a duty officer system, the alert from EMO tends to go to the Department Emergency Preparedness officer. We would prefer to go the duty officer system. We will certainly have a dedicated team of individuals who can function as liaison officers here, but we really need to bring in the alert system that we use in the health system to start anything. So that is one recommendation.

One of things we are going to be working on in our areas, is we are going to be working continued to enhance our relationship with Emergency Health Services because certainly at times we know that both of us are here and I think some early preplanning, as Tony has said. Checklists are important that would be common to some of the situations we may face.

We have had discussions with our partners in Environment and Labour and in Agriculture and Fisheries, that we need to get together on an on-going basis to have common planning for the situations you are going to see in many disasters. The areas around food, around water, around air, around surveillance and monitoring. Really the public health system in Nova Scotia is split between the three departments. We do have those common events. We got together very well I think, on site, to deal with this and we had done some pre-event planning. Our intent is to continue pre-event. So basically what we can come up with here is the broad public - environmental - health - food safety preplanned disaster kit with the expertise that we can bring to the table when it is required and it is going to be required in many of the disaster type situations.

In terms of other recommendations, in the Emergency Operations Centre here, one of the situations we found was that at the time of the event the duty officer was also, the Associate Medical Officer of Health. We see that there is a distinct role for Public Health at the table here in addition to a representation from the health system. There are public health issues which tend to occur, as I say, in many disasters. We are recommending that there be a place for Public Health at the EOC table, at the Provincial EOC table.

The other area which relates in terms of the municipal level is that if you look at many of the jurisdictions of public health, food safety, water issues, tend to be much more integrated, in fact, at times accountable to the municipal level. So that is why when you saw situations such as the power outage in Ontario, you would see that there would be Public Health representation at municipal responses. I think we really need to look at and work with what is the common approach that we have between Environment, Labour, Agriculture and Fisheries and Public Health and we need to be there, I think, at the table of the municipalities, at their Emergency Operation Centres, their planning groups, in addition to the need to have the other parts of the health system access to that. So I think there is some discussion that needs to take place around that level.

The most important recommendation, though, as I said from the start, that I think that the ability to respond was related to the fact that we do have training and training has been mentioned. It is critical. That is really important. In addition, we also have a commitment to regularly exercising so that we can update and be ready for things.

It is really important. I have been through many, well, several debriefings after disasters and one of the things I think we need to do is we need to ensure that at the most senior level within government, there is commitment to ongoing emergency preparedness. That to me means commitment to training and it means commitment to regular on-going multijurisdictional exercising. I think that is the way that we will be better prepared, we learn a lot. I don't want any more early disasters. As Barry said, things may come. But I think if they don't come, even if they do or don't come we need to plan for them, prepare and that means training exercising and updating after that. It means that commitment needs to be maintained at the senior level. That's it.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Jeff. Anything for health, please? [no response] Thank you very much. On to Service Nova Scotia Municipal Relations, Andrew Paton, please.

ANDREW PATON

SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA & MUNICIPAL RELATIONS

Good afternoon. My name is Andrew Paton, I am with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. I am the alternate DEPO for the Province.

The role that Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations plays in emergencies is relatively small, being mainly through our public inquiries at our call centre, though we also have our resources of maps, aerial photos at our land information centres and we have a network of offices across the Province. Our Access Centres, our Registries of Motor Vehicles, Registries of Deeds offices, et cetera, which means we have a presence in every municipal unit in the Province.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations participated in the emergency operations related to Hurricane Juan right from the time of the assembly of the Provincial Emergency Activation Team on the evening of Sunday, September 28th, right up until the present time.

Our Department's main role has been to provide information to the public via our pubic enquiries phone line, for which we both have a local number in the metro area as well as a 1-800 number. Our call centre operates out of Maritime Centre in Halifax.

Following the hurricane our call centre was unable to operate on the Monday directly following the hurricane but it was up and running once the MT&T building, sorry, Aliant had power on the Tuesday. Call volumes on the matters relative to the emergency remained relatively low. Still, those calls that we did receive, even prior to the formal public announcement on any program relative to the disaster financial assistance program, were about that very subject.

The call centre's main role has been to provide the public with information about recovery efforts and in particular the disaster financial assistance program, once it was announced.

Although the Department is pleased with the service that we were able to provide, we would like to point out the following about the call centre and its operation in support of an emergency related activities

There is a relatively small number of staff, in the call centre, in terms of handling both the regular and emergency calls and operating that on an extended period of time would be problematic.

Even during emergencies, which to date have been localized either with regard to SwissAir or with regard to Hurricane Juan, the rest of the Province is still up and running and our call centres do get a lot of phone calls from across the Province. In fact, on the Tuesday following Hurricane Juan because the end of the month had just passed, we actually had more call volumes from the rest of the Province than we normally do.

Next thing is call centre staff are not trained in emergency response matters so if people in a call centre got calls relevant to that they often, much like what Mike brought forward, you know, they were asked questions about subjects which were beyond their area of expertise.

The last point about the call centre I'd like to make is that we don't have any back-up power supply.

I would like to make some very general observations and some suggestions. These don't all directly relate to our Department but I thought it was just worthwhile to bring them to the attention and get them on the record.

The Eric Spicer Building and the JEOC, first of all. This facility functioned quite well during the recent emergency. It provided a working environment for representatives from all three levels of government throughout the emergency and was safe and operable with continuous power because of its backup generators.

The large and multi-channel TV screen at JEOC was a valuable resource for keeping us apprised of the events, such as the progress of Hurricane Juan. Loss of the satellite feed was an issue during the Hurricane Juan emergency. An effort should be made to have a back-up system to avoid repeat of this.

Personnel identification. In contrast to some other EOC's, for example those with smaller municipalities, the provincial EOC is a reasonably large operation involving DEPO's, alternates and others who may have never met before. In order for these individuals to work effectively together it is important that they know who each other is and who they represent. Hence, it is considered beneficial to continue or institute some of the following practises: sign-in procedures and listing and posting of representatives from the various departments or agencies, and this should be done on an on-going basis because there is turnover of staff; may seem simple or trite, but name tags for individuals clearly displacing their name, department, who they represent; prominent labelling of the work stations and their assigned department or agency area, so that if you want to contact somebody you know where to go.

The next point, the third point, is information communication. This is a critical part of any effective response to an emergency. There were numerous phone numbers out there for the public to call - EMO Nova Scotia, HRM EMO, public inquiries numbers. There may have been confusion about who to call or frustration when they couldn't get through on those lines. This whole area of public information might benefit from some further investigations to determine if there may be more effective ways to respond to enquiries, for example, one 1-800 number that handles all calls, and they would hand it off to the appropriate call takers. So that may be something that might be considered.

Also, some consideration might be given to other approaches to information dissemination, for example leaflets at reception centres, food and water distribution centres, especially in the situation with many people who are without power. We say we're going to post it on the website, we can say that we're going to have it on television or on the radio stations, but if these people don't have power or whatever it is sometimes better to look at other opportunities to get the information out.

The last point that I would like to make is the Departmental Emergency Preparedness Plans. There is nothing like a real emergency to bring to light the need, as well as the opportunities, for improvement in the current operational procedures both within departments and at the provincial corporate level. In light of Juan, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations intends to begin to review its current emergency plan. Other departments, as I have already heard, are in a similar position.

To make the most of this opportunity, it might be a good time for EMO to work with departments to ensure that they have the necessary information, tools and resources to effectively update emergency plans. Thank you.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Andrew. Anything, please, for Service Nova Scotia. [No response] Thank you, moving along to the Department of National Defence please, Captain Rouleau.

CAPTAIN D. ROULEAU
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Okay, Captain Rouleau, I am the Deputy Fleet Commander for Halifax but I am here in my capacity as the officer that was appointed to come and be the liaison staff with the EMO team here.

I have heard the term once every hundred years mentioned a couple of times here and I don't need to remind anybody around the table here and I am sure that Ken Kirkwood, from the Hurricane Centre can back me up here, that during that very week that we were working here, meeting twice a day, we were tracking yet another hurricane that was coming up our way and gave a scare to Newfoundland, at least this time around. So only a fool would go on the supposition that it will not happen again.

Yes, indeed the work ahead of time was done by EMO and OCIPEP to get the federal request and all the necessary bureaucratic stuff that has to happen before. It is a good thing and it is also a bad thing.

By the time Monday turned around the request had gone in and the effort was there to be put forward only to meet, I would say, chaos to start with. With the fact that there was no, at the time, I think the overwhelming availability of manpower that was made available to both HRM and Nova Scotia Power Corporation at the time was simply too much to be handled right at that moment in time.

That generated a lack of or the look and the search for priority settings and I can only mention the issue of the militaries in the cemeteries trying to clear up. However, that one was very carefully planned and, in fact, was very carefully managed. There was a request for that to happen and the communications came out to tell the public as to why that was taking place. It was not just luck that they happened to be asked to do that.

We found many of our teams standing basically waiting in various areas of the city without really direction, without guidance. We went back or we go back to what the priority were for the military effort to come here. The task were to the facilitate the restoration of Nova Scotia Power Grid to HRM, and was also to facilitate the opening of the main traffic and arteries within HRM. Now the key word there is "facilitate".

During the first day, on the Monday, we faced a problem where we had the manpower but it was not being used very efficiently at all. By Tuesday, because the request of that being made before, by Tuesday we have over 417 sailors from the Halifax area that were there and divided in teams of ten and 20s. We had the 36th Brigade, who is also militia here local in Halifax. But to make matters worse, meaning increasing this available manpower, was that that two RCR from Gagetown arrived also on Tuesday. So by the end of the day on Tuesday we had 1133 people and that is the people that were ready to put into the street, not the people that were supporting those people going into the street.

It was only that despite -- there was a meeting on Monday with EMO and various HRM and also the DND effort, at which point we offered to include in addition to our liaison officers that we had to here in the EMO office, we had them in uniform there, they were 24/7, there were junior officers that were there but they were critical to provide the liaison with our headquarters and the various task force headquarters that we had. We offered to include, though to add a military staff planning team to this and it took until late on that Tuesday to get that approved and I arrived here with two of my colleagues there and we had our first meeting at 18:00 of that evening, in a room in the back there, with various staff from HRM, Barry and his team and for the first time we had the Nova Scotia Power Corporation rep at that meeting. It was the first time that we had a rep at that meeting there.

There we made decision, there we switched our DND effort from what it was planned to be a daylight operations only, would stand down at nighttime and restart. We switched there to 24/7 and that was done to match the Nova Scotia Power cycle and also to match the

HRM cycle. So we redivided our teams and match a 24/7, and, in fact, we connected all of our DND teams with Nova Scotia Power and HRM team at that point in time. That was Tuesday evening that we started to do that. From Tuesday evening each one of those teams was basically linked to one of the Nova Scotia Power or HRM team and it went very well from that point on.

We were looking for maps when we got here, only to be told that the maps were being printed. That was Tuesday evening. That's two days after we got hit. I think that's a lesson learned there that that should be ready to go. When things need to be planned and things start to move forward.

The next thing that happened was on Wednesday, we through one of the meetings with HRM and Nova Scotia Power, we realized that nobody was really tracking the advance or the progress that this huge manpower force was doing. I support the comment made by Nova Scotia Power there that I am sure you people were doing it but it wasn't getting to HRM or to us to find out where the advance was made, and where the real situation, the real hardships were. It wasn't until we found out on that Wednesday that we were expected to do that, that we brought in the digital maps that we brought in here to start to show what is the situation. That goes back to

Barry's point there, situational awareness, as to this group here around the table, it is very powerful. What was missing is some level of situational awareness for all this group here to know what was really going on and where it was going on.

From the Wednesday, it was provided and, in fact, my counterpart here in the back, Commander Darlington, was in the task force one in Halifax. They started to track down street by street as they were making advances as to where were the problems, where were the effort required and it went extremely well, all the way up until the Sunday when the actual military effort stood down.

As far as the liaison, I mentioned there that the HRM, the Nova Scotia Power Corporation, and the DND effort, I think if there is one man that needs to be mentioned here for the record, and he is from HRM, it is Mr. Dennis LeBlanc. Of course he is not sitting around the table here, but he is really the architect that made all of this happen down at a tactical level, down with the trucks, down with the lights at night time to connect all of those things together to make them work. So for the record, Dennis LeBlanc should be congratulated for what he did there on his own.

All teams, all tasks force, whether it the Navy, the 36 Brigade militia, as well as the army group that came from Gagetown, all three commented on that one individual for the work that he did down on the street.

My last point here would be that I support totally the RCMP point that he made before he left, support Dr. Scott for what he mentioned there, respecting many others that mentioned that training. Training is a critical issue of this and in order to do that training we need to bring all of the players and DND would be more than happy to be included in that list of players to come in there and be able to bring about what we can provide. That goes also for Community Services there. I was mentioning before, you mentioned the issue of those cancer patients that were brought in in Stadacona, and the frustration of having the rep across the table from you, as we are today here, and not sure as to how we should go about request. I would say in a case like this we beg for forgiveness after the fact and we get things going on that moment there. Many of those things did happen during the operations and I hope that was very useful to your group as well.

Situation awareness for us is the basis of any type of planning like this, to know what is going on, where is it going on and where the priorities should be. If there is one thing that we need to bring about, and I see you do have the facility video capabilities here, I think it is just a matter of making it happen. I think Barry pointed that out earlier, and this is something that would need to be done for the next one because the next one will come, thank you.

THE CHAIR Thank you very much, Captain. We certainly appreciate all the efforts on behalf of the Navy and the Land Force Atlantic. We really appreciate all that you've done for us, thank you. Any questions, please? [No response] Thank you. Go on to Chris Moir, please, Transportation and Public Works.

CHRISTOPHER MOIR

TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS

Thanks Mike, good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Christopher Moir, Monday to Friday I'm the Manager at Transportation and Public Works Environmental Services Section, but under the alternate other duties as may be assigned I am the Emergency Preparedness Officer for the Department.

TPW's response went quite well, however, we have identified some areas where we could improve.

During the hurricane event TPW responded to specific requests through the joint operations centre to clear roads particularly in Shubenacadie and to transport emergency stretcher cots and blankets.

During and following the event highway operations crews with assistance from some private contractors and equipment cleared debris from public roads. All the roads under our jurisdiction were reported cleared and safely passable by Friday October 3rd.

On that same Friday, TPW sent crews and equipment to the Truro area, 45 to 50 trained employees along with power saws, trucks, service vehicles and one brush chipper came from all over the Province, the less affected areas, from Sydney to Yarmouth.

Additional employees arrived on Saturday and work continued on Sunday with approximately 30 crew members working in the Truro area and an additional 30 in the County of Colchester working alongside Nova Scotia Power crews.

Highway operations are currently in the final stages of a major effort to remove tree debris in the rural areas of HRM, this work is being conducted in conjunction with HRM and contractors. Teams have been clearing brush, logs, and stumps placed along the roadside by residents. The goal is to have this phase of the work completed by Friday, which happens to be Halloween.

Public work staff secured buildings along the Halifax waterfront as best they could as this storm approached. As mentioned, they also transported cots and blankets to evacuation centres during the storm event and subsequently they delivered portable generators and made the necessary electrical connections at a number of the evacuation centres.

Following the storm they surveyed all provincially owned buildings affected by the storm to asses, electrical, mechanical and structural damage. Priorities have been established and work is ongoing.

These guys are tradesman for the most part, they're not writers, per se. They take a form with them when they go to evaluate these buildings and I saw one and it identifies the building and its location and most of the form is blank until you get to exterior siding. Next to it is just the cryptic word "gone".

Some issues, some areas where we could improve during that first night I learned the importance and power of the trunk mobile radio system. The Public Works responders, my Public Works alternate and I must obtain radios and the appropriate training so that we can effectively communicate with each other and the highway operations personnel during these emergencies situations.

Identification of personnel and the vehicles they drive was once again an issue for the Public Works responders. During the hurricane agencies such as police and fire services recognize the highway operations yellow trucks with flashing lights and allowed those people to pass. But our Public Works employees in their white vans had to get out and talk their way through several road blocks.

We will be looking, as others have mentioned, at the issue of worker safety during these events. With the two metro bridges closed, we ended up with staff and an empty cube van on the Bicentennial Highway at the height of the storm. No one was hurt and the van stayed right side up.

The highway operations people already have guidelines and procedures for pulling our ploughs off the highway when it is too dangerous to plough snow. This is not an issue that they take lightly, but it is an issue which we will have to re-visit with the variety of weather events in mind.

Communication through the media raised a couple of issues for us. Immediately following the storm the public were told designated staff only should be reporting to work, well, we don't have any designation for our staff so we need to look at some sort of protocol to identify who should report to work based on the nature of the emergency we have.

The second communications issue was confusion regarding the brush removal protocols in rural HRM. We need to develop communications plans early in the process as we did, but ultimately we rely on the media to accurately and fully convey the information to the public. Now personally I have been listening to some of the stuff on the radio and I can't figure out what you are supposed to do and what you are not allowed to do.

Coordination between agencies was an issue for the staff involved in the brush clearing in Colchester. Eagerness to proceed combined with delays in receiving clear direction lead to some confusion regarding the work assignment.

Transportation and Pubic Works is a huge department with a lot of equipment and personnel with many varied skills sets and capabilities. Try as we might to view the department as one entity, it is in reality two merged departments, which don't always know the other's capabilities. It is an issue we have attempted to address in our current emergency response plan, but one we will revisit in coming months. We may utilize our internal newsletter and other presentation opportunities such as the Annual Road Builders Conference to try and increase knowledge of the capabilities and encourage our staff to think outside the box.

Again, as others have mentioned, these events cause us all to pull our emergency response plans off the shelf and give it a once over. We have to add more detail to the various call-out procedures. Dave Hamilton, my alternate is working on that, he had to leave. We have to look at each planned response from the perspective of someone from the other side of the department and we have to expand written information on the department's capabilities. Thank you Mike.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Chris, anything for Department of Transportation and Public Works, please? Michael please.

MICHAEL MCKEAGE

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

Michael McKeage, Director of Operations Emergency Health Services. If it may just save the Department some work, the Saturday before the storm, I wasn't entirely sure what I was missing so I phoned FEMA in Florida. I asked them what was I missing and some young lady off of a softball game came out of it and wondered what I was interested in hurricanes for in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, wherever that was. It became a very good and positive relationship. One of the things they forwarded to me, sir, is 120-page report on the study of hurricane winds as it relates to emergency vehicles. They do have a set criteria of when not to go out and all of that has been brought together. They share it willingly and while we may not exchange cards here, the name is Michael McKeage and it is 832-8347. I would be happy to just send that over to you, it might save you some homework.

CHRIS MOIR Okay, thank you very much.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Michael. Anything else please DEPO TPW? Okay, along to Intergovernmental Affairs. please, Dr. Allastair Saunders.

DR. ALLASTAIR SAUNDERS

NS INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Thank you, Mike. From one very large department to one very small central agency. My name is Allastair Saunders, I'm with Intergovernmental Affairs. I suspect that our role in Emergency Operations is to be a resource, to provide links to federal and other provincial governments, if the links, which you have already established, need re-enforcement or aren't working as well as they could.

Fortunately, as we heard around the table this morning, nearly all of those links worked very well indeed. So basically our role in the course of the week and a half after Hurricane Juan was to show up from Sunday the 28th and at the subsequent briefings and take notes. We also did do some work in providing briefing notes on financial assistance arrangements to try to assist EMO staff who appeared to be absolutely sleepless. They were certainly able to function on all cylinders even without sleep, but had better things to do than write briefing notes. I hope we were of some use then.

I think our task really begins now, working with other provincial/territorial governments and the federal government and with our colleagues at EMO, and other departments to maintain pressure to streamline financial assistance arrangements for disasters. Certainly, the time spent around this table during the week and a half helped us get a first-hand knowledge of how disaster response works and I trust it will make our representations to the federal government more effective in the future. So thank you very much.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Allastair. Anything for Intergovernmental Affairs, please? [no response] Mr. Brian Carter, Department of Justice, please.

BRIAN CARTER

NS DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Brian Carter from the Nova Scotia Department of Justice. I just want to start off by saying I was thankful that this whole operation was a hurricane and not a terrorist attack or a civil unrest matter, which would involved Justice a lot more.

Having said that, Justice is something that everyone should understand is critical in all of our operations because Justice is what the very fibre of our society is built on. The rules and laws that keep us all acting as a society and coordinating things comes from Justice. We also deal with coordinating police and other efforts in emergencies.

Another piece of it that I want to comment on is civil unrest and the possibility in a hurricane, in this situation there is a very real possibility of some civil unrest. We talked around the table during that whole week about crime, and most of the crime that we were dealing with when I was here was talking about price gouging. There are other crimes that happen during these types of emergencies. We could have had people vandalizing things or looting and so on and so forth. I am going to give a lot of credit to the Armed Forces, who were on the streets, preventing that sort of crime. I firmly believe, and the Department of Justice firmly believes, their visible presence 7/24 for that week, although their mandate had nothing to do with that, had a great deal to do with preventing that sort of crime, just being present and we thank you very much for that.

Some observations from within the operations centre, from my perspective in here, what I required was better access to computer information and if there is any way that we can -- rather than access GroupWise remotely, access it directly, my log-on into my actual items, and that would be useful. That was the only thing that I noticed in here that would be useful from our perspective.

Within Justice, some of the things that will change from an emergency operations side is the call-out list that we had weren't good, weren't effective. We would have been able to make do, if the emergency required. But we wouldn't have been as effective as possible so that will be changed right away.

Another area that will be changed is having the various departments or sections within Justice reporting to this organization twice daily to meet the information needs of the bi-daily meetings that were going on here. We didn't have that, it was like pulling hen's teeth, and I made mention many times about the courts being very independent in what they were doing. We're working to get that straightened out. I have affected the judges in that they're now concerned about some winter snow storms and what they should do. So I guess they do listen somewhat.

The next thing is court services which is one of the larger groups, and we talked about that a lot during that week. Court services, had the courts operational during some of that week. Some were, some weren't. Again the independence of the judges, we can't control, but court services for emergencies are going to split into two divisions for emergencies only. Right now sheriffs services falls under court services. The sheriffs services are actually a resource and they shouldn't be lumped in with court services with respect to emergencies. There's well over 200 personnel there that we can tap into. There's lots of vehicles. These people are trained nearly as well as police officers and better in particular areas such as transporting of individuals to and from cells and facilities like that. But we can utilize them for many, many things - their first aid training, they can if you need deliver messages, hand-deliver messages, they can do those things. They are also trained in crowd control and other avenues such as that. So we're going to move them from that umbrella of court services in emergencies to an essential service versus what they are now. So that's one of the steps we will be taking.

With respect to the courts, and judges, they're going to develop an emergency plan that is a little more suited to dealing with situations where we don't want people in the city, as they weren't prepared in this particular case.

Prosecution will also be added in here because prosecutors have a key role in making sure that we have information that we need, in particular, dealing with a laws that were pertaining to things like price gouging.

We needed someone to contact to get the information for the police agencies. So prosecution will now be involved in this whereas they were not in the past.

Some of the changes that we have to think about when we're impacting the court side of it is, one of the bigger areas of concern in this case, and I mentioned it one day during that week, was where we remand people, they've been arrested for something, they're remanded and put in the Correction Centre. Those remands have a time limit on them. If the courts aren't operational then they can lapse and we have two choices, leave them in there, which means they're unlawfully in custody and the Province could get sued, or release them. Most of society does not want that individual out there again, so the option is to keep them in. So what will be set up is an emergency procedure for judges and it will utilize a Sheriff's Department, as well, to pick up judges, take them to those facilities, be there to remand those people so we don't have lapses.

If you are thinking about those things being minor things, if you are the victim of those crimes they are not minor, especially if they are crimes of violent acts.

So it is important that we follow up on these things.

Those are the key things out of this one, but they are certainly valuable lessons for us. They're lessons that will let us move forward.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Brian. Any questions for Justice, please. [no response] No. We have a couple of gentlemen sitting away from the table this morning. I'd like to introduce them and ask them if they have anything to add. Peter MacKay, the Emergency Measures coordinator for Pictou County. Now do you have anything you wish to add, Peter?

PETER MACKAY
EMERGENCY MEASURES, PICTOU COUNTY

Not a lot, Mike. As to Pictou County on the whole got off relatively unscathed by the hurricane. Some areas in the western part of the county got some trees down and some buildings damaged, whatever. Also, I guess, actually in the Town of Pictou there were some boats damaged and some trees. But certainly relative to HRM and Colchester, I guess, my comment is that we got off quite well.

I notice John Webb had some comments about some claims in the New Glasgow area regarding Social Services, but other than that.

THE CHAIR Thank you. Any questions in the direction of Peter, please. [no response] Thank you, Peter. I'd like to acknowledge, Jim Hannon, the Emergency Measures

Coordinator for Cumberland County.

JIM HANNON

EMERGENCY MEASURES - CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Thank you very much, Mike. Just Cumberland County faired off very well in this hurricane. Just three fire districts were without power for an extended period of time. We found that in our plans we're going to have to get generator back-up power to some of these communities out there.

Another thing we came across was we had shut-in people or elderly people living in homes with no contact with anybody else for a couple of days, they were without food and water. So we're now setting up a databank in Cumberland County to incorporate our civic addressing mapping system and data from the communities broken down into fire districts where we can put in the names and addresses of individuals in the communities that have to be checked on if we have a power outage in excess of eight hours. So we'll have the fire departments or ground search and rescue, or somebody physically go knock on the door and we'll get a hard copy of their report, whether they need to be evacuated or whether they're fine or whatever. So just the two things that come to light out of that, thank you.

THE CHAIR Thank you, Jim. Anything for Cumberland County, please. [no response] Thank you. I'd also like to acknowledge, I believe he's departed, but Kevin Dearman, the Emergency Measures Coordinator for East Hants was here for most of the morning but I believe he had to leave.

I just have a couple of comments that I would like to make here in conclusion. Firstly, that I am thankful. I am thankful that the track of that hurricane didn't start in Yarmouth and go up through the middle of the Province. Again we were fortunate in this emergency that we weren't dealing with that. It would have taken us considerably longer to recover from that and the implications of not being able to draw on our own resources throughout the Province that hadn't been affected would have been a considerable challenge.

I am also thankful that I have learned what a Category 2 hurricane means. I am thankful that it wasn't a 4 or 5 and I don't want to see one. It is just hard really to put it into perspective what that really means when it gets up to those top levels.

Our sit. reps that we produced in here, just as a matter of interest, I met with our American colleagues and Canadian partners in the International Emergency Management Group last week in Portland, Maine, it's our mutual aid arrangements. Maine is actually using our sit. reps to run an exercise in their own state, which I thought was rather interesting. They were very much in the picture with us throughout. Their director was in contact virtually on a daily basis, just offering help and what have you.

The diversity of the emergency public information, I think, this time around really struck me the volume, just the number of issues that really required address and were addressed. They were considerably more than what we had experienced in other emergencies and a tip of the hat to Communications Nova Scotia for their help with that.

I think we did extremely well, and that is in no small part to the dedication of those partners around this table. The comments came in from other jurisdictions, we heard them last week in Portland. There's been no end of e-mails coming in to me and surprisingly enough, very few complaints about public alerting. I was kind of sensitive to that issue, I think, after some of the issues in the House and whatnot. But I would say that probably one out of ten might have been critical of the amount of information of warning that they received. All the rest were just the opposite.

So I think from the reactions that I've received from everybody, whether in our government, other governments, I think we can rest assured that we did well and I'd like to thank you all very much for everything that you have done in response to this emergency, and for your participation here today.

So thank you very much, and this will conclude our debriefing.

[DEBRIEFING CONCLUDES - 12:47 p.m.]